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Camelot Series.



W.C. Barber



The Camelot Series.

EDITED BY ERNEST RHYS.

STORIES FROM CARLETON.

STORIES FROM CARLETON:
WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY W. B. YEATS.

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TO MY FRIEND
THE
AUTHOR OF "SHAMROCKS."

W. B. Y.

CONTENTS.



	PAGE
THE POOR SCHOLAR	I
TÜBBER DERG ; OR, THE RED WELL	117
WILDGOOSE LODGE	183
SHANE FADH'S WEDDING	200
THE HEDGE SCHOOL	240

WILLIAM CARLETON.

AT the end of the last century there lived in the town-land of Prillisk, in the parish of Clogher, in the county of Tyrone, a farmer named Carleton. Among his neighbours he was noted for his great memory. A pious Catholic, he could repeat almost the whole of the Old and New Testament, and no man ever heard tell of Gaelic charm, rann, poem, prophecy, miracle, tale of blessed priest or friar, revelation of ghost or fairy, that did not already lie on this man's tongue.

His wife, Mary, was even better known. Hers was the sweetest voice within the range of many baronies. When she went to sing at wake or wedding the neighbours for miles round would flock in to hear, as city folk do for some famous *prima donna*. She had a great store of old Gaelic songs and tunes. Many an air, sung once under all Irish roof-trees, has gone into the grave with her. The words she sang were Gaelic. Once they asked her to sing the air, "The Red-haired Man's Wife," to English words. "I will sing for you," she answered, "but the English words and the air are like a quarrelling man

and wife. The Irish melts into the tune : the English does not." She could repeat many poems, some handed down for numberless years, others written by her own grandfather and uncle, who were noted peasant poets in their day. She was a famous keener likewise. No one could load the wild funeral song with so deep sorrow. Often and often when she caught up the cry the other keeners would become silent in admiration.

On Shrove-Tuesday, in the year 1798, when pitch-caps were well in fashion, was born to these two a son, whom they called William Carleton. He was the youngest of fourteen children.

Before long his mind was brimful of his father's stories and his mother's songs. In after days he recorded how many times, when his mother sat by her spinning-wheel, singing "*Shule agra*" or the "*Trougha*," or some other "song of sorrow," he would go over with tears in his eyes, and whisper, "Mother dear, don't sing that song ; it makes me sorrowful." Fifty years later his mind was still full of old songs that had died on all other lips than his.

At this time Ireland was plentifully stored with hedge schoolmasters. Government had done its best to crush out education, and only succeeded in doing what like policy had done for the priestcraft—surrounding it with a halo. Ditchers and plough-boys developed the strangest enthusiasm for Greek and Latin. The worst of it was, the men who set up schools behind the hedges were often sheer impostors. Among them, however, were a few worthy of fame, like Andrew Magrath, the Munster poet,

who sang his allegiance to the fairy, "Don of the Ocean Vats."

The boy Carleton sat under three hedge schoolmasters in succession—Pat Fryne, called Mat Kavanagh in the stories; O'Beirne of Findramore; and another, the master in "The Poor Scholar," whose name Carleton never recorded, as he had nothing but evil to say of him. They were great tyrants. Pat Fryne caused the death of a niece of Carleton's by plucking her ear with such violence that some of the internal tendons were broken, and inflammation set in.

When Carleton was about fourteen, the unnamed schoolmaster was groaned out of the barony; and his pupil, after six months' dutiful attendance at all wakes, weddings, and dances, resolved to make his first foray into the world. He set out as "a poor scholar," meaning to travel away into Munster in search of education. He did not go beyond Granard, however, for there he dreamed that he was chased by a mad bull, and, taking it as an evil omen, returned home. His mother was delighted to have her youngest once more. She had often repeated, while he was away, "Why did I let my boy go? Maybe I will never see him again."

He now returned to his dances, fairs, and merry-making with a light heart. None came near him at jig or hornpipe. He was great, too, with his big peasant's body, at all kinds of athletic contests, could swing a shillelah with any man, and leap twenty-one feet on a level. But in his own family he was most admired for his supposed

learning, and showed a great taste, as he tells, for long words. Hence it was decided that he should become a priest.

When about nineteen he made his second foray into the world. His father often told him of St. Patrick's Purgatory on an island in Lough Derg—how St. Patrick killed the great serpent and left his bones changed into stone, visible to all men for ever, and of the blessing that falls upon all pilgrims thither. To the mind of the would-be priest, and tale-weaver that was to be, the place seemed full of endless romance. He set out, one of the long line of pilgrims who have gone thither these twelve hundred years to murmur their rosaries. In a short time a description of this pilgrimage was to start him in literature.

On his return he gave up all idea of the priesthood, and changed his religious opinions a good deal. He began drifting slowly into Protestantism. This Lough Derg pilgrimage seems to have set him thinking on many matters—not thinking deeply, perhaps. It was not an age of deep thinking. The air was full of mere debater's notions. In course of time, however, he grew into one of the most deeply religious minds of his day—a profound mystical nature, with melancholy at its root. And his heart, anyway, soon returned to the religion of his fathers; and in him the Established Church proselytisers found their most fierce satirist.

One day Carleton came on a translation of *Gil Blas*, and was filled at once with a great longing to see the world. Accordingly, he left his native village and went

on his third foray, this time not to return. He found his way to the parish of Killanny, in Louth, and stayed for a while with the priest, who was a relation of the one in his native parish. At the end of a fortnight, however, he moved to a farmer's house, where he became tutor to the farmer's children. A quarter of a mile from the priest's house was Wildgoose Lodge, where, six months before, a family of eight persons had been burnt to ashes by a Ribbon Society. The ringleader still swung on a gibbet opposite his mother's door, and as she came in and out it was her custom to look up and say, "God have mercy on the sowl of my poor martyr." The peasants when they passed by would often look up too, and murmur, "Poor Paddy." The whole matter made a deep impression on the mind of Carleton, and again and again in his books he returns to the subject of the secret societies and their corruption of the popular conscience. He discusses their origin in book after book, and warns the people against them.

Presently he found that he was not seeing the world in this parish of Killanny, and finding, beside, that life in the farmer's household was very dull, he started for Dublin, and arrived with two shillings and ninepence in his pocket. For some time he had a hard struggle, trying even to get work as a bird-stuffer, though he knew absolutely nothing of the trade. He wrote a letter in Latin to the colonel of a regiment, asking his advice about enlisting. The colonel seems to have made out the Latin, and dissuaded him.

In those days there lived in Dublin a lean controversialist, Cæsar Otway. A favourite joke about him was, "Where was Otway in the shower yesterday?" "Up a gun-barrel at Rigby's." He also had been to Lough Derg. When he had looked down upon it from the mountains he had felt no reverence for the grey island consecrated by the verse of Calderon and the feet of twelve centuries of pilgrims. His stout Protestant heart had merely filled with wrath at so much "superstition."

Carleton and Otway came across each other somehow. The lean controversialist was infinitely delighted with this peasant convert, and seems to have befriended him to good purpose. By his recommendation, "The Lough Derg Pilgrim" was written. A few years later, Carleton cleared away many passages. Cæsar Otway would hardly approve its present form. As we have it now, the tale is a most wonderful piece of work. The dim chapel at night, the praying peasants, the fear of a supernatural madness if they sleep, the fall of the young man from the gallery—no one who has read it forgets these things.

From this on, there is little to be recorded but the dates of his books. He married, and for a time eked out his income by teaching. When about thirty he published the "Traits and Stories," and with them began modern Irish literature. Before long there were several magazines in Dublin, and many pens busy. Then came "Fardarougha, the Miser," the miser himself being perhaps the greatest of all his creations. In 1846

was published "Valentine M'Clutchy": his pronouncement on the Irish Land Question, and on the Protestant-Catholic Controversy. The novel is full of wonderful dialogues, but continually the intensity of the purpose lowers the art into caricature. Most of the prophecies he made about the land question have been fulfilled. He foretold that the people would wake up some day and appeal to first principles. They are doing so with a vengeance. Many of the improvements also that he recommended have been carried out.

Young Ireland and its literature were now in full swing. The "National Library," founded by Davis, was elbowing the chap-books out of the pedlars' packs. As "Traits and Stories" had started the prose literature of Ireland, Ferguson's articles on Hardiman's minstrelsy, with their translations from the Gaelic, had sown a harvest of song and ballad. Young Ireland was crusading in verse and prose against the sins of Old Ireland. Carleton felt bound to do his part, and wrote a series of short stories for the "National Library"—"Art Maguire," a temperance tale; "Paddy Go-easy," finished in nine days to fill a gap left by the death of Davis, and attacking the bad farming and slovenly housekeeping of so many peasants; and "Rody the Rover," on his old theme—the secret societies. Rody is an *agent provocateur*—a creature common enough in Ireland, God knows. At the tale's end, with mingling of political despair and Celtic fatalism, evil is left triumphant and good crushed out.

A few years later, on the death of John Banim, an

attempt was made to have his pension transferred to Carleton. It might have saved him from the break-up of his genius through hack-work. But some official discovered that this author of a notable temperance tale drank more than was desirable. "The Red Well," "The Dream of a Broken Heart," and all his beautiful and noble creations counted for nothing. Government, that did not mind a drunken magistrate, more or less, was shocked, and the pension refused.

The rest of his life was an Iliad of decadence, his genius gradually flickering out. Many a bright, heavenward spark on the way, though ! At last, nothing left but the smoking wick, he died at Woodville, Sandford, near Dublin, on the 30th of January 1869, aged seventy, and was buried at Mount Jerome. A short time before his death he received the pension refused years before, but seems to have known much poverty.

William Carleton was a great Irish historian. The history of a nation is not in parliaments and battle-fields, but in what the people say to each other on fair-days and high days, and in how they farm, and quarrel, and go on pilgrimage. These things has Carleton recorded.

He is the great novelist of Ireland, by right of the most Celtic eyes that ever gazed from under the brows of storyteller. His equals in gloomy and tragic power, Michael and John Banim, had nothing of his Celtic humour. One man alone stands near him there—Charles Kickham, of Tipperary. The scene of the pig-driving peelers in "For

the Old Land," is almost equal to the best of the "Traits and Stories." But, then, he had not Carleton's intensity. Between him and the life he told of lay years in prison, a long Fenian agitation, and partial blindness. On all things flowed a faint idealising haze. His very humour was full of wistfulness.

There is no wistfulness in the works of Carleton. I find there, especially in his longer novels, a kind of clay-cold melancholy. One is not surprised to hear, great humorist though he was, that his conversation was more mournful than humorous. He seems, like the animals in Milton, half emerged only from the earth and its brooding. When I read any portion of the "Black Prophet," or the scenes with Raymond the Madman in "Valentine M'Clutchy," I seem to be looking out at the wild, torn storm-clouds that lie in heaps at sundown along the western seas of Ireland; all nature, and not merely man's nature, seems to pour out for me its inbred fatalism.

W. B. YEATS.

STORIES FROM CARLETON.

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THE POOR SCHOLAR.

ONE day about the middle of November, in the year 18—, Dominick M'Evoy and his son Jemmy were digging potatoes on the side of a hard, barren hill, called Esker Dhu. The day was bitter and wintry, the men were thinly clad, and as the keen blast swept across the hill with considerable violence, the sleet-like rain which it bore along pelted into their garments with pitiless severity. The father had advanced into more than middle age; and having held, at a rack-rent, the miserable waste of farm which he occupied, he was compelled to exert himself in its cultivation, despite either obduracy of soil or inclemency of weather. This day, however, was so unusually severe that the old man began to feel incapable of continuing his toil. The son bore it better; but whenever a cold rush of stormy rain came over them, both were compelled to stand with their sides against it, and their heads turned, so as that the ear almost rested back upon the shoulder, in order to throw the rain off their faces. Of each, however, that cheek which was exposed to the rain and storm was beaten into a red hue, whilst the other part of their faces was both pale and hunger-pinched.

The father paused to take breath, and, supported by his spade, looked down upon the sheltered inland, which, inhabited chiefly by Protestants and Presbyterians, lay rich and warm-looking under him.

"Why, thin," he exclaimed to the son, a lad about fifteen, "sure I know well I oughtn't to curse yees, anyway, you black set; and yit, the Lord forgive me my sins, I'm almost timpted to give yees a volley, an' that from my heart out! Look at

thim, Jimmy agra—only look at the black thieves ! how warm an' wealthy they sit there in our own ould possessions, an' here we must toil, till our fingers are worn to the stumps, upon this thievin' bent. The curse of Cromwell on it ! You might as well ax the divil for a blessin' as expect anything like a dacent crop out of it. Look at thim two ridges !—such a poor sthring o' praties is in it !—one here and one there—and yit we must turn up the whole ridge for that same ! Well, God sind the time soon whin the right will take place, Jimmy agra !”

“An' doesn't Pasthorini say it ! Sure, whin Twenty-five comes, *we'll* have our own agin : the right will overcome the might—the bottomless pit will be locked—ay, double bolted, if St. Pether gets the keys, for he's the very boy that will accommodate the heretics wid a warm corner ; an' yit, faith, there's many o' thim that myself ud put in a good word for, afther all.”

“Throth, an' here's the same, Jimmy. There's Jack Stuart, an' if there's a cool corner in hell, the same Jack will get it—an' that he may I pray God this day, an' amin ! The Lord sind it to him ! for he richly deserves it. Kind, neighbourly, and frindly is he an' all belongin' to him ; an' I wouldn't be where a hard word ud be spoken of him, nor a dog in connection wid the family ill thrated ; for which rason may he get a cool corner in hell, I humbly sufflicate.”

“What do you think of Jack Taylor ? Will he be cosy ?”

“Throth I doubt so—a blessed youth is Jack ; yit I myself ud hardly wish it. He's a heerum-skeerum, divil-may-care fellow, no doubt of it, an' laughs at the priests, which same, I'm thinkin', will get him below stairs more nor a new-milk heat, anyway ; but thin, agin, he thrates thim dacent, an' gives thim good dinners, and they take all his rollicken in good part, so that it's likely he's not in arnest in it, an' surely they ought to know best, Jimmy.”

“What do you think of *Yallow Sam* ?—*honest Sam*, that they say was born widout a heart, an' carries the *black* wool in his ears, to keep out the cries of the widows an' the orphans that are long rotten in their graves through his villainy ?—He'll get a snug berth !”¹

“*Yallow Sam*,” replied the old man, slowly, and a dark shade of intense hatred blackened his weather-beaten countenance as he looked in the direction from which the storm blew ;

¹ This was actually said of the person alluded to—a celebrated usurer and agent to two or three estates, who was a little deaf, and had his ears occasionally stuffed with black wool.

"'twas *he* left us where we're standin', Jimmy—undher this blast, that's cowl'dher an' bittherer nor a stepmother's breath this cuttin' day. 'Twas *he* turned us on the wide world whin your poor mother was risin' out of her faver. 'Twas he squenched the hearth whin she wasn't able to lave the house, till I carried her in my arms into Paddy Cassidy's—the tears fallin' from my eyes upon her face that I loved next to God. Didn't he give our farm to a purple Orangeman? Out we went to the winds an' skies of heaven, bekase the rich *bodagh* made interest aginst us. I tould him whin he chated me out o' my fifteen goolden guineas that his masther, the landlord, should hear of it; but I could never get next or near him to make my complaint! Eh?—a snug berth! I'm only afeard that hell has no corner hot enough for him—but lave that to the divil himself; if he doesn't give him the best thratement that hell can afford, why I'm not here."

"Divil a one o' the *ould boy's* so bad as they say, father; he gives it to *thim* hot an' heavy, at all evints."

"Why, even if he was at a loss about Sam, depind upon it he'd get a hint from his betthers above that ud be sarviceable."

"They say he visits him as it is, and that Sam can't sleep widout some one in the room wid him. Dan Philips says the priest was there, an' had a mass in every room in the house; but Charley Mack tells me there's no thruth in it. He was advised to it, he says; but it seems the ould boy has too strong a houl't of him, for Sam said he'd have the divil any time sooner nor the priest, and it's likest what he would say."

"Och, och, Jimmy, avick, I'm tir'd out! We had betther give in; the day's too hard, an' there's no use in standin' agin the weather that's in it. Lave the ould villain to God, who he can't chate, anyway."

"Well, may our curse go along wid the rest upon him, for dhrivin' us to sich an unnatural spot as this! Hot an' heavy, into the sowl an' marrow of him may it penetrate! An' sure that's no more than all the counthry's wishin' him, whether or not—not to mintion the curses that's risin' out o' the grave agin him, loud an' piercin'!"

"God knows it's not slavin' yourself on such a day as this *you'd* be, only for him. Had we kep our farm, *you'd* be now well an' in your larnin' for a priest—an' there ud be one o' the family sure to be a gintleman, anyhow; but that's gone too, agra. Look at the smoke, how comfortably it rises from Jack Sullivan's, where the priest has a station to-day! 'Tisn't fishin' for a sthray pratie he is, upon a ridge like this. But it can't be

helped ; an' God's will be done ! Not himself !—faix, it's he that'll get the height of good thratement, an' can ride home, well lined, both inside an' outside. Much good may it do him !—'tis but his right."

The lad now paused in his turn, looked down on Jack Sullivan's comfortable house, sheltered by a clump of trees, and certainly saw such a smoke tossed up from the chimney as gave unequivocal evidence of preparation for a good dinner. He next looked "behind the wind," with a visage made more blank and meagre by the contrast ; after which he reflected for a few minutes, as if working up his mind to some sudden determination. The deliberation, however, was short. He struck his open hand upon the head of the spade with much animation, and instantly took it in both hands, exclaiming—

"Here, father, here goes ; to the divil once an' for ever I pitch slavery,"¹ and as he spoke the spade was sent as far from him as he had strength to throw it. "To the divil I pitch slavery ! An' now, father, wid the help o' God, this is the last day's work I'll ever put my hand to. There's no way of larnin' Latin here ; but off to Munster I'll start, an' my face you'll never see in this parish till I come home a priest an' a gentleman ! But that's not all, father dear : I'll rise you out of your distress, or die in the struggle. I can't bear to see your grey hairs in sorrow and poverty."

"Well, Jimmy—well, agra—God enable you, avourneen ; 'tis a good intintion. The divil a one o' me will turn another spade-ful aither, for this day ; I'm *dhrookin*'² wid the rain. We'll go home an' take an air o' the fire—we want it ; and aftherwards we can talk about what you're *on*³ for."

It is usual to attribute to the English and Scotch character exclusively a cool and persevering energy in the pursuit of such objects as inclination or interest may propose for attainment ; whilst Irishmen are considered too much the creatures of impulse to reach a point that requires coolness, condensation of thought, and efforts successively repeated. This is a mistake. It is the opinion of Englishmen and Scotchmen who know not the Irish character thoroughly. The fact is, that in the attainment of an object, where a sad-faced Englishman would despair, an Irishman will probably laugh, drink, weep, and fight during his progress to accomplish it. A Scotchman will miss it perhaps, but, having done all that could be done, he will try another speculation. The Irishman may miss it too, but to

¹ Toil, labour.

² Dripping, very wet.

³ Determined on.

console himself he would break the head of any man who may have impeded him in his efforts, as a proof that he *ought* to have succeeded; or, if he cannot manage that point, he will crack the pate of the first man he meets, or he will get drunk, or he will marry a wife, or burn a house, or hamstring a neighbour's cow, or cut the throat of a proctor, or swear a gauger never to show his face in that quarter again; or he will exclaim, if it be concerning a farm, with a countenance full of simplicity—"God bless your honour, long life and honour to you, sir! Sure an' 'twas but a thrife, anyhow, that your reverence will make up for me another time. An' 'tis well I know your lordship ud be the last man on airth to give me the cowld shoulder, so you would, an' I an ould residenthur on your own father's estate; the Lord be praised for that same! An' 'tis a happiness, an' nothin' else, so it is, even if I paid double rint—wherein maybe I'm not a day's journey from that same, manin' the double rint, yer honour; only that one would do a great deal for the honour an' glory of livin' undher a raal gintleman—an' that's but rason."

There is, in short, a far-sightedness in an Irishman which is not properly understood, because it is difficult to understand it. I do not think there is a nation on earth whose inhabitants mix up their interest and their feelings together more happily, shrewdly, and yet less ostensibly, than Irishmen contrive to do. An Irishman will make you laugh at his joke, while the object of that joke is wrapped up from you in the profoundest mystery, and you will consequently make the concession to a certain point of his character, which has been really obtained by a faculty you had not penetration to discover, or, rather, which he had too much sagacity to exhibit. Of course, as soon as your back is turned, the broad grin is on him, and one of his cheeks is stuck out two inches beyond the other, because his tongue is in it—at your stupidity, simplicity, or folly. Of all the characters of all the people of all nations on this habitable globe, I verily believe that that of the Irish is the most profound and unfathomable, and the most difficult on which to form a system, either social, moral, or religious. The only power equal to grapple with it is that of the Church of Rome, and certainly that lays Paddy in the dust; there he is over-reached, and *bammed*, and blarnied, and made to knock under.

It would be difficult, for example, to produce a more signal instance of energy, system, and perseverance than that exhibited in Ireland during the struggle for Emancipation. Was there not flattery to the dust? blarney to the eyes? heads

broken? throats cut? houses burned? and cattle houghed? And why? Was it for the *mere pleasure* of blarney—of breaking heads (I won't dispute the last point, though, because I scorn to give up the glory of the national character)—of cutting throats—burning houses—or houghing cattle? No; but to secure Emancipation. In attaining that object was exemplified the Irish method of gaining a point.

"Yes," said Jemmy, "to the divil I pitch slavery! I will come home able to rise yees from your poverty, or never show my face in the parish of Ballysogarth agin."

When the lad's determination was mentioned to his mother and the family, there was a loud and serious outcry against it; for no circumstance is relished that ever takes away a member from an Irish hearth, no matter what the nature of that circumstance may be.

"Och, thin, is it for that *bocaun*¹ of a boy to set off wid himself, runnin' through the wide world afther larnin', widout money or friends? Avourneen, put it out of yer head. No; struggle on as the rest of us is doin', and maybe ye'll come as well off at the long run."

"Mother, dear," said the son, "I wouldn't wish to go agin what you'd say; but I made a promise to myself to *rise* yees out of your poverty if I can, an' my mind's made up on it; so don't cross me, or be the manes of my havin' bad luck on my journey, in regard of me goin' aginst yer will, when you know 'twould be the last thing I'd wish to do."

"Let the gossoon take his way, Vara. Who knows but it was the Almighty put the thoughts of it into his head? Pasthorini says that there will soon be a change, an' 'tis a good skame it'll be to have him a *sogarth* when the fat livin's will be walkin' back to their ould owners."

"Oh, an' may the Man above grant *that*, I pray Jamini this day! for aren't we harrished out of our lives, scrapin' an' scramblin' for the black thieves what we ought to put on our backs an' into our own mouths. Well, they say it's not lucky to take money from a priest, because it's the price o' sin; an' no more it can, seein' that they want it themselves; but I'm sure it's *their*² money that *ought* to carry the bad luck to them, in regard of their gettin' so many bittier curses along wid it."

When a lad from the humblest classes resolves to go to Munster as a poor scholar, there is but one course to be pursued in preparing his outfit. This is by a collection at the chapel

¹ Soft, innocent person.

² The Protestant clergy.

among the parishioners, to whom the matter is made known by the priest, from the altar, some Sunday previous to his departure. Accordingly, when the family had all given their consent to Jemmy's project, his father went, on the following day, to communicate the matter to the priest, and to solicit his co-operation in "questing," or making a collection in behalf of the lad, on the next Sunday but one; for there is always a week's notice given, and sometimes more, that the people may come prepared.

The conversation already detailed between father and son took place on Friday, and on Saturday—a day on which the priest never holds a station, and, of course, is generally at home—Dominick M'Evoy went to his house with the object already specified in view. The priest was at home; a truly benevolent man, but, like the worthies of his day, not overwhelmed with learning, though brimful of kindness and hospitality mixed up with drollery and simple cunning.

"Good morrow, Dominick," said the priest, as Dominick entered.

"Good morrow kindly, sir," replied Dominick. "I hope your reverence is well, *and* in good health."

"Throth I am, Dominick. I hope there's nothing wrong at home; how is the wife and childhre?"

"I humbly thank your reverence for axin'. Throth, there's no rason for complainin' in regard o' the health; sarra one o' them but's bravely, consitherin' all things; I bleeve I'm the worst o' them myself, yer reverence. I'm gettin' ould, you see, an' stiff, an' wake; but that's only in the coorse o' nathur; a man can't last always. Wait till them that's young an' hearty *now* harrows as much as I ploughed in my day, an' they won't have much to brag of. Why, thin, but yer reverence stands it bravely—faix, wondherfully itself—the Lord be praised! an' it warms my own heart to see you look so well."

"Thank you, Dominick. Indeed, my health, God be thanked, is very good. Ellish," he added, calling to an old female servant—"you'll take a glass, Dominick, the day is cowlidish—Ellish, here, take the kay, and get some spirits—the *poteen*, Ellish—to the right hand in the cupboard. Indeed, my health is very good, Dominick. Father Murray says he invies me my appetite, an' I tell him he's guilty of one of the seven deadly sins."

"Ha, ha, ha! Faix, an' invy *is* one o' them, sure enough; but a joke is a joke in the manetime. A pleasant gintleman is the same Father Murray, but yer reverence is too deep for

him in the jokin' line, for all that. Ethen, sir, but it's you that gave ould Cokely the keen cut about his religion—ha, ha, ha ! Myself laughed till I was sick for two days afther it—the ould thief ! ”

“ Eh ?—Did you hear that, Dominick ? Are you sure that's the poteen, Ellish ? Ay, an' the best of it all was that his pathrun, Lord Foxhunter, was present. Come, Dominick, try that—it never seen wather. But the best of it all was—

“ ‘ Well, Father Kavanagh,’ said he, ‘ who put you into the Church ? Now,’ said he, ‘ you'll come over me wid your regular succession from St. Peter, but I won't allow that.’

“ ‘ Why, Mr. Cokely,’ says I back to him, ‘ I'll give up the succession,’ says I, ‘ and what is more, I'll grant that *you* have been *called* by the Lord, and that *I* have *not*; but the Lord that called you,’ says I, ‘ was *Lord Foxhunter*.’ Man, you'd tie his Lordship *wid* a cobweb, he laughed so heartily.

“ ‘ Bravo, Father Kavanagh,’ said he. ‘ Cokely, you're *bate*,’ said he ; ‘ and upon my honour, you must both dine with me to-day,’ says he—and capital claret he keeps.”

“ Your health, Father Kavanagh, an' God spare you to us ! Hah ! wather ! Oh, the divil a taste itself did the same stuff *see*. Why, thin, I think your reverence an' me's about an age. I bleeve I'm a thrifle ouldher ; but I don't bear it so well as you do. The family, you see, and the childhre, an' the cares o' the world, pull me down ; throth, the same family's a throuble to me. I wish I had them all settled safe, anyway.”

“ What do you intend to do wid them, Dominick ? ”

“ In throth, that's what brought me to yer reverence. I've one boy—Jimmy—a smart chap entirely, an' he has taken it into his head to go as a poor scholar to Munster. He's fond o' the larnin', there's not a doubt o' that, and small blame to him, to be sure ; but then, again, what can I do ? He's bint on goin', an' I'm not able to help him, poor fellow, in any shape ; so I made bould to see yer reverence about it, in hopes that you might be able to plan out something for him more betther nor I could do. I have the good wishes of the neighbours, and indeed of the whole parish, let the thing go as it may.”

“ I know that, Dominick, and for the same rason we'll have a ‘ Quest’¹ at the three althars. I'll mintion it to them after mass to-morrow, and let them be prepared for Sunday week, when you can make the collection. Hut, man, never fear ; we'll get as much as will send him half-way to the priesthood ;

¹ A charitable collection.

and I'll tell you what, Dominick, I'll never be the man to refuse giving him a couple of guineas myself."

"May the heavenly Father bless an' keep your reverence. I'm sure 'tis a good right the boy has, as well as all of us, to never forget your kindness. But as to the money—he'll be proud of your assistance the other way, sir—so not a penny—'tis only your good-will we want—hem—except, indeed, that you'd wish yourself to make a piece of kindness of it to the poor boy. Oh, not a drop more, sir—I declare it'll be apt to get into my head. Well, well, sure an' we're not to disobey our clargy, whether or not: so here's your health over agin, your reverence! an' success to the poor child that's bint on good!"

"Two guineas his reverence is to give you from himself, Jimmy," said the father, on relating the success of this interview with the priest; "an' faix, I was widin one of refusin' it, for feard it might bring something *unlucky*¹ wid it; but, thought I, on the spur, it's best to take it, anyway. We can asily put it off on some o' these black-mouthed Presbyterians or Orangemen, by way of changin' it, an' if there's any hard fortune in it, let them have the full benefit of it, *ershi mishu*."²

It is by trifles of this nature that the invincible and enduring hatred with which the religious sects of Ireland detest those of a different creed is best known. This feeling, however, is sufficiently mutual. Yet on both sides there is something more speculative than practical in its nature. When they speak of each other as a distinct class, the animosity, though abstracted, appears to be most deep; but when they mingle in the necessary intercourse of life, it is curious to see them frequently descend, on both sides, from the general rule to those exceptions of good-will and kindness which natural benevolence and mutual obligation, together with a correct knowledge of each other's real characters, frequently produce. This abstracted hatred has been generally the curse of our unhappy country; it has kept us too much asunder, or, when we met, exhibited us to each other in our darkest and most irritating aspects.

Dominick's conduct in the matter of the priest's money was also a happy illustration of that mixture of simplicity and shrewdness with which an Irishman can frequently make points meet, which superstition alone, without ingenuity, would keep

¹ There is a superstitious belief in some parts of Ireland that priest's money is unlucky; "because," say the people, "it is the price of sin"—alluding to absolution.

² Say I.

separate for ever. Many another man might have refused the money from an ignorant dread of its proving *unlucky*; but his mode of reasoning on the subject was satisfactory to himself, and certainly the most ingenious which, according to his belief, he could have adopted.

The eloquence of a country priest, though rude, and by no means elevated, is sometimes well adapted to the end in view, to the feelings of his auditory, and to the nature of the subject on which he speaks. Pathos and humour are the two levers by which the Irish character is raised or depressed; and these are blended in a manner too anomalous to be ever properly described. Whoever could be present at a sermon on the Sunday when a Purgatorian Society is to be established would hear pathos and see grief of the first water. It is then he would get a "nate" and glowing description of Purgatory, and see the broad, humorous Milesian faces of three or four thousand persons of both sexes shaped into an expression of the most grotesque and clamorous grief. The priest, however, on particular occasions of this nature, very shrewdly gives notice of the sermon, and of the purpose for which it is to be preached: if it be grave, the people are prepared to cry; but if it be for a political or any other purpose not decidedly religious, there will be abundance of that rough, blunt satire and mirth so keenly relished by the peasantry, illustrated, too, by the most comical and ridiculous allusions. That priest, indeed, who is the best master of this latter faculty is uniformly the greatest favourite. It is no unfrequent thing to see the majority of an Irish congregation drowned in sorrow and tears, even when they are utterly ignorant of the language spoken; particularly in those districts where the Irish is still the vernacular tongue. This is what renders notice of the sermon and its purport necessary; otherwise the honest people might be seriously at a loss whether to laugh or cry.

"*Ellish, avourneen, gho dhe dirsha?*—Ellish, my dear, what is he saying?"

"*Och, musha niel eshighum, ahagur—ta sha er Purgathor, ta barlhum.*—Och, I dunna that, jewel; I bleeve he's on Purgatory."

"*Och, och, oh—och, och, oh—oh, i, oh, i, oh!*"

And on understanding that Purgatory is the subject, they commence their grief with a rocking motion, wringing their hands, and unconsciously passing their beads through their fingers, whilst their bodies are bent forward towards the earth.

On the contrary, when the priest gets jocular—which I should have premised he never does in what is announced as a solemn sermon—you might observe several faces, charged with mirth and laughter, turned, even while beaming with this expression, to those who kneel beside them, inquiring—

“Arrah, Barny, what is it—ha, ha, ha!—what is it he’s sayin’? The Lord spare him among us, anyhow, the darlin’ of a man! Eh, Barny, you that’s in the inside o’ the English?”

Barny, however, is generally too much absorbed in the fun to become interpreter just then; but as soon as the joke is nearly heard out, in compliance with the importunity of his neighbours, he gives them a brief hint or two, and instantly the full chorus is rung out, long, loud, and jocular.

On the Sunday in question, as the subject could not be called strictly religious, the priest, who knew that a joke or two would bring in many an additional crown to Jimmy’s *caubeen*, was determined that they should at least have a laugh for their money. The man, besides, was benevolent, and knew the way to the Irish heart—a knowledge which he felt happy in turning to the benefit of the lad in question.

With this object in view, he addressed the people somewhat in the following language:—

“*Blessed is he that giveth his money to him that standeth in need of it.*”

“These words, my brethren, are taken from St. Paul, who, among ourselves, knew the value of a friend in distress as well as any other apostle in the three kingdoms—hem! It’s a nate text, my friends, anyhow. He manes, however, when we have it to give, my own true, well-tried ould friends!—when we have it to give. Its absence althers the case in toto; because you have all heard the proverb—‘There is no takin’ money out of an empty purse;’ or, as an ould ancient author said long ago upon the same subject—

“‘*Cantabit whackuus coram lathrone whiathur!*’

—(Dshk, dshk, dshk¹—that’s the larnin’!)—He that carries an empty purse may whistle at the thief. It’s *sing* in the Latin; but sing or whistle, in my opinion, he that goes wid an empty purse seldom sings or whistles to a pleasant tune. Melancholy music I’d call it, an’ wouldn’t, maybe, be much astray after.—

¹ This sound, which expresses wonder, is produced by striking the tip of the tongue against the palate.

Hem! At all evints, may none of this present congregation, whin at their devotions, ever sing or whistle to the same tune! No; let it be to 'money in both pockets,' if you sing at all; and as long as you have that, never fear but you'll also have the 'priest in his boots' into the bargain—[Ha, ha, ha!—God bless him, isn't he the pleasant gintleman, all out—ha, ha, ha!—moreover, an' by the same a token, it's thrue as Gospel, so it is]—for well I know that you're the high-spirited people, who wouldn't see your priest without them, while a fat parson, with half-a-dozen chins upon him, red and rosy, goes about every day in the week bogged in boots, like a horse trooper!—[Ha, ha, ha!—good, Father Dan! More power to you—ha, ha, ha! We're the boys that wouldn't see you in want o' them, sure enough. Isn't he the droll crathur?]

"But suppose a man hasn't money, what is he to do? Now, this divides itself into what is called Hydrostatics an' Metaphysics, and must be proved logically in the following manner:—

"First, we suppose him *not* to have the money—there I may be wrong or I may be right; now for the illustration and the logic.

"Pether Donovan."

"Here, your reverence."

"Now, Pether, if I suppose you to have *no* money, am I right, or am I wrong?"

"Why, thin, I'd be sarry to prove your reverence to be wrong, so I would; but for all that, I bleeve I must give it aginst you."

"How much have you got, Pether?"

"Ethen, but 'tis yer reverence that's comin' close upon me: two or three small notes an' some silver."

"How much silver, Pether?"

"I'll tell your reverence in a jiffy. I ought to have a ten shillin', barrin' the price of a quarther o' tobaccy that I bought at the crass-roads beyant. Nine shillin's an' some hapuns, yer reverence."

"Very good, Pether; you must hand me the silver, till I give the rest of the illustration wid it."

"But does yer reverence mind another ould proverb?—'A fool an' his money's asy parted.' Sure an' I know you're goin' to do a joke upon me."

("Give him the money, Pether," from a hundred voices; "give his reverence the money, you nager, you—give him the silver, you dirty spalpeen, you—hand it out, you misert.")

"Pether, if you don't give it dacently, I'll not take it ; and in that case——"

"Here, here, your reverence—here it is ; sure I wouldn't have your ill-will for all I'm worth."

"Why, you nager, if I wasn't the first orathor livin', barrin' Cicero or Demosthenes himself, I couldn't *schrew* a penny out o' you ! Now, Pether, there's a specimen of logic for you ; an' if it wasn't good, depind upon it the money would be in your pocket still. I've never known you to give a penny for any charitable purpose since ever I saw your face ; but I'm doin' a good action in your behalf for once ; so if you have any movin' words to say to the money in question, say them, for you'll never finger it more."

A burst of the most uproarious mirth followed this manceuvre, in which the simple priest joined heartily ; whilst the melancholy of Peter's face was ludicrously contrasted with the glee which characterised those that surrounded him.

"Hem ! Secondly.—A man, you see, may have money, or he may not, when his fellow-creature who stands in need of it makes an appale to his dacency and his feelings ; and sorry I'd be to think that there's a man before me, or woman either, who'd refuse to assist the distresses of any one, of any creed, church, or persuasion, whether white, black, or yallow. It's what I never taught you, nor never will tache you to the day of my death ! To be sure, a fellow-creature may say, 'Help me, my brother, I am distressed ;' or, 'I am bent on a good purpose, that your kindness can enable me to accomplish.' But suppose that you have not the money *about you at the time*, wouldn't you feel sorry to the backbone ? Ay, would yees—to the very core of the heart itself. Or if any man—an' he'd be nothing else than a *bodagh* that would say it—if any man would tell me that you would not, I'd—yes—I'd give him his answer, as good as I gave to ould Cokely long ago.

"The next point is, What would you do if you hadn't it about you ? It's I that can tell you what you'd do. You'd say, 'I haven't got it, brother'—for ev'ry created bein' of the human kind is your brother, barrin' the women, an' they are your sisters—[this produced a grin upon many faces]—'but,' says you, 'if you wait for a day or two, or a week, or maybe for a fortnight, I'll try what I can do to help you.'

"Picture to yourselves a fellow-creature in distress—suppose him to have neither hat, shoe, nor stocking—[this was a touch of the pathetic]—and altogether in a state of utter destitution ! Can there be a more melancholy picture than this ? No, there

can't. But 'tisn't the tithe of it!—a barefaced robbery is the same tithe—think of him without father, mother, or friend upon the earth—maybe he has poor health—maybe he's sick, an' in a strange country—[here Jemmy's mother and friends sobbed aloud, and the contagion began to spread—the priest, in fact, knew where to touch]—his face is pale—his eyes sunk with sickness and sorrow in his head—his bones are cuttin' the skin—he knows not where to turn himself—hunger and sickness are strivin' for him.—[Here the grief became loud and general, and even the good-natured preacher's own voice got somewhat unsteady.]—He's in a bad state entirely—miserable! more miserable!! most miserable!!!—[Och, och, oh!]
—sick, sore, and sorry! he's to be pitied, felt for, and compassionated!—[a general outcry]—'tis a faver he has, or an ague maybe, or a rheumatism, or an embargo¹ on the limbs, or the king's evil, or a consumption, or a decline, or God knows but it's the falling-sickness.—[Och, och, oh! och, och, oh! from the whole congregation, whilst the simple old man's eyes were blinded with tears at the force of the picture he drew.]—Ay, maybe it's the *falling-sickness*, and in that case how on earth can he *stand* it?—[He can't, he can't, wurra strew, wurra strew! och, och, oh! ogh, ogh, ogh!]
—The Lord in heaven look down upon him—[Amin, amin, this blessed an' holy Sunday that's in it! och, oh!]
—pity him—[Amin, amin! och, och, an' amin!]
—with misercordial feeling and benediction! He hasn't a rap in his company! moneyless, friendless, houseless, an' homeless! Ay, my friends, you all have homes—but *he* has none! Thrust back by every hard-hearted spalpeen, and he maybe a better father's son than the Turk that refuses him! Look at your own childhre, my friends! Bring the case home to yourselves! Suppose he was one of them—alone on the earth, and none to pity him in his sorrows! Your own childhre, I say, in a strange land!—[Here the outcry became astounding—men, women, and children in one general uproar of grief.]—An' this may all be Jimmy M'Evoy's case, that's going in a week or two to Munster as a poor scholar—maybe his case, I say, except you befriend him, and show your *dacency* and your *feelings*, like Christians and Catholics; and for either dacency or kindness I'd turn yeys against any other congregation in the diocess, or in the kingdom—ay, or against Dublin itself, if it was convanient."

Now here was a *coup de main*—not a syllable mentioned about Jimmy M'Evoy until he had melted them down ready

¹ Lumbago, we presume.

for the impression, which he accordingly made to his heart's content.

"Ay," he went on, "an' 'tis the parish of Ballysogarth that has the name far and near for *both*, and well they deserve it. You won't see the poor gorsoon go to a strange country with empty pockets. He's the son of an honest man—one of yourselves; and although he's a poor man, you know 'twas Yallow Sam that made him so—that put him out of his comfortable farm and slipped a *black mouth* into it. You won't turn your backs on the son in regard of *that*, anyway. As for Sam, let *him* pass; he'll not grind the poor nor truckle to the rich when he gives up his stewardship in the kingdom come. Lave him to the friend of the poor—to his God; but the son of them that he oppressed, you will stand up for. He's going to Munster, to learn 'to go upon the Mission'; and on Sunday next there will be a collection made here and at the other two althars for him; and, as your own characters are at stake, I trust it will be neither mane nor shabby. There will be Protestants here, I'll engage, and you must act dacently before them, if it was only to set them a good example. And now I'll tell yees a story that the mintion of the Protestants brings to my mind:—

"There was, you see, a Protestant man and a Catholic woman once married together. The man was a swearing, drinking, wicked rascal, and his wife the same: between them they were a blessed pair, to be sure. She never bent her knee under a priest until she was on her death-bed; nor was he known ever to enter a church door, nor to give a shilling in charity but once, that being as follows:—He was passing a Catholic place of worship one Sunday, on his way to fowl—for he had his dog and gun with him; 'twas beside a road, and many of the congregation were kneeling out across the way. Just as he passed they were making a collection for a poor scholar—and surely they that love the larning deserve to be encouraged! Well, behold you—says one of them, 'Will you remember the poor scholar,' says he, 'and put something in the hat? You don't know,' says he, 'but his prayers will be before you.'¹ 'True enough, maybe,' says the man, 'and there's a crown to him, for God's sake.' Well and good—the man died, and so did the wife; but the very day before her departure she got a scapular and died in it. She had one sister, however, a good crature, that did nothing but fast and pray, and make her sowl.

¹ In the other world.

This woman had strong doubts upon her mind, and was very much troubled as to whether or not her sister went to heaven; and she begged it as a favour from the blessed Virgin that the state of her sister's soul might be revealed to her. Her prayer was granted. One night, about a week after her death, her sister came back to her, dressed all in white, and circled round by a veil of glory.

"'Is that Mary?' said the living sister.

"'It is,' said the other; 'I have got liberty to appear to you,' says she, 'and to tell you that I'm happy.'

"'May the holy Virgin be praised!' said the other. 'Mary dear, you have taken a great weight off of me,' says she; 'I thought you'd have a bad chance, in regard of the life you led.'

"'When I died,' said the spirit, 'and was on my way to the other world, I came to a place where the road divided itself into three parts: one to heaven, another to hell, and a third to purgatory. There was a dark gulf between me and heaven, and a breach between me and purgatory that I couldn't step across, and if I had missed my foot there, I would have dropped into hell. So I would, too, only that the blessed Virgin put my own scapular over the breach, and it became firm, and I stepped on it and got over. The Virgin then desired me to look into hell, and the first person I saw was my own husband, standing with a green sod under his feet. "He got that favour," said the blessed Virgin, "in consequence of the prayers of a holy priest, that had once been a poor scholar, that he gave assistance to at a collection made for him in such a chapel," says she. Then,' continued the soul, 'Mary,' says she, 'but there's some great change in the world since I died, or why would the people live so long? It can't be less than six thousand years since I departed, and yet I find every one of my friends just as I left them.'

"'Why,' replied the living sister, 'you're only six days dead.'

"'Ah, avourneen!' said the other, 'it can't be—it can't be! for I have been thousands on thousands of years in pain!'—and as she spoke this she disappeared.

"Now, there's *proof* of the pains of purgatory, where one day seems as long as a thousand years; and you know we oughtn't to grudge a thrifle to a fellow-creature, that we may avoid it. So you see, my friends, there's nothing like good works. You know not when or where this lad's prayers may benefit you. If he gets ordained, the first mass he says will be for his benefactors; and in every one he celebrates after that they must also be

remembered : the words are—*pro omnibus benefactoribus meis, per omnia secula seculorum!*

“ Thirdly—hem !—I now lave the thing to yourselves.

“ But wasn’t I a match for Pether Donovan, that would brake a stone for the marrow¹—Eh?—[A broad laugh at Peter’s rueful visage.]—Pether, you Turk, will your heart never soften—will you never have dacency, an’ you the only man of your family that’s so? Sure they say you’re going to be married some of these days. Well, if you get your wife in my parish, I tell you, Pether, I’ll give you a fleecin’, for don’t think I’ll marry you as chape as I would a poor honest man. I’ll make you shell out the yallow boys, and ’tis that will go to your heart, you nager, you ; and then I’ll eat you out of house and home at the stations. May the Lord grant us, in the manetime, a dacent appetite, a blessing which I wish you all in the name of the,” etc.

At this moment the congregation was once more in convulsions of laughter at the dressing which Peter, whose character was drawn with much truth and humour, received at the hands of the worthy pastor.

Our readers will perceive that there was not a single prejudice, or weakness, or virtue in the disposition of his auditory left untouched in this address. He moved their superstition, their pride of character, their dread of hell and purgatory, their detestation of Yellow Sam, and the remembrance of the injury so wantonly inflicted on M’Evoy’s family ; he glanced at the advantage to be derived from the lad’s prayers, the example they should set to Protestants, made a passing hit at tithes, and indulged in the humorous, the pathetic, and the miraculous. In short, he left no avenue to their hearts untouched ; and in the process by which he attempted to accomplish his object he was successful.

¹ I know not whether this may be considered worthy of a note or not. I have myself frequently seen and tasted what is appropriately termed by the peasantry “Stone Marrow.” It is found in the heart of a kind of soft granite, or perhaps I should rather say freestone. The country people use it medicinally, but I cannot remember what particular disease it is said to cure. It is a soft saponaceous substance, not unpleasant to the taste, of a bluish colour, and melts in the mouth like the fat of cold meat, leaving the palate greasy. How far an investigation into its nature and properties might be useful to the geologist or physician it is not for me to conjecture. As the fact appeared to be a curious one, and necessary, moreover, to illustrate the expression used in the text, I thought it not amiss to mention it. It may be a *bonne bouche* for the geologists.

There is, in fact, much rude, unpolished eloquence among the Roman Catholic priesthood, and not a little which, if duly cultivated by study and a more liberal education, would deserve to be ranked very high.

We do not give this as a specimen of their *modern* pulpit eloquence, but as a sample of that in which some of those Irish clergy shone who, before the establishment of Maynooth, were admitted to orders immediately from the hedge-schools, in consequence of the dearth of priests which then existed in Ireland. It was customary in those days to ordain them even before they departed for the Continental colleges, in order that they might, by saying masses and performing other clerical duties, be enabled to add something to the scanty pittance which was appropriated to their support. Of the class to which Father Kavanagh belonged, there are few, if any, remaining. They sometimes were called "hedge-priests,"¹ by way of reproach; though, for our own part, we wish their non-interference in politics, unaffected piety, and simplicity of character had remained behind them.

On the Sunday following, Dominick M'Evoy and his son Jemmy attended mass, whilst the other members of the family, with that sense of honest pride which is more strongly inherent in Irish character than is generally supposed, remained at home, from a reluctance to witness what they could not but consider a degradation. This decency of feeling was anticipated by the priest, and not overlooked by the people; for the former, the reader may have observed, in the whole course of his address never once mentioned the word "charity"; nor did the latter permit the circumstance to go without its reward, according to the best of their ability. So keen and delicate are the perceptions of the Irish, and so acutely alive are they to those nice distinctions of kindness and courtesy, which have in their hearts a spontaneous and sturdy growth that mocks at the stunted virtues of artificial life.

In the parish of Ballysogarth there were three altars, or places of Roman Catholic worship; and the reader may suppose that the collection made at each place was considerable. In truth, both father and son's anticipations were far under the sum collected. Protestants and Presbyterians attended with their contributions, and those of the latter who scrupled to be present at what they considered to be an idolatrous worship

¹ This nickname was first bestowed upon them by the Continental priests, who generally ridiculed them for their vulgarity. They were, for the most part, simple but worthy men.

did not hesitate to *send* their quota by some Roman Catholic neighbour. Their names were accordingly announced with an encomium from the priest, which never failed to excite a warm-hearted murmur of approbation. Nor was this feeling transient; for we will venture to say that had political excitement flamed up even to rebellion and mutual slaughter, the persons and property of *those* individuals would have been held sacred.

At length Jemmy was equipped; and sad and heavy became the hearts of his parents and immediate relations as the morning appointed for his departure drew nigh. On the evening before, several of his more distant relatives came to take their farewell of him, and, in compliance with the usages of Irish hospitality, they were detained for the night. They did not, however, come empty-handed: some brought money; some brought linen, stockings, or small presents—"Jist, Jimmy asthore, to keep *me* in yer memory, sure—an' nothin' else it is for, mavourneen."

Except Jemmy himself, and one of his brothers, who was to accompany him part of the way, none of the family slept. The mother exhibited deep sorrow, and Dominick, although he made a show of firmness, felt, now that the crisis was at hand, nearly incapable of parting with the boy. The conversation of their friends, and the cheering effects of the poteen, enabled them to sustain their loss better than they otherwise would have done, and the hope of seeing him one day "an ordained priest" contributed more than either to support them.

When the night was nearly half spent, the mother took a candle and privately withdrew to the room in which the boy slept. The youth was fair, and interesting to look upon—the clustering locks of his white forehead were divided; yet there was on his otherwise open brow a shade of sorrow, produced by the coming separation, which even sleep could not efface. The mother held the candle gently towards his face, shading it with one hand, lest the light might suddenly awake him; she then surveyed his features long and affectionately, whilst the tears fell in showers from her cheeks.

"There you lie," she softly sobbed out in Irish, "the sweet pulse of your mother's heart, the flower of our flock, the pride of our eyes, and the music of our hearth! Jimmy, avourneen machree, an' how can I part wid you, my darlin' son! Sure when I look at your mild face, and think that you're takin' the world on your head to *rise* us out of our poverty, isn't my heart brakin'? A lonely house we'll have afther you, acushla! Goin' out an' comin' in, at home or abroad, your voice won't be

in my ears, nor your eye smilin' upon me ! An' thin to think of what you may suffer in a s'trange land ! If your head aches, on what tendher breast will it lie ? or who will bind the ribbon of comfort¹ round it ? or wipe your fair 'mild brow in sickness ? Oh, blessed Mother, hunger, sickness, and sorrow may come upon you, *when you'll be far from your own, an' from them that loves you !*"

This melancholy picture was too much for the tenderness of the mother ; she sat down beside the bed, rested her face on her open hand, and wept in subdued but bitter grief. At this moment his father, who probably suspected the cause of her absence, came in, and perceived her distress.

"Vara," said he, in Irish also, "is my darlin' son asleep?"

She looked up with streaming eyes as he spoke, and replied to him with difficulty, whilst she involuntarily held over the candle to gratify the father's heart by a sight of him.

"I was keepin' him before my eye," she said. "God knows but it may be the last night we'll ever see him undher our own roof ! Dominick, achora, I doubt I can't part wid him from my heart."

"Then how can I, Vara ?" he replied. "Wasn't he my right hand in everything ? When was he from me, ever since he took a man's work upon him ? And when he'd finish his own task for the day, how kindly he'd begin an' help me wid mine ! No, Vara, it goes to my heart to let him go away upon sich a plan, an' I wish he hadn't taken the notion into his head at all."

"It's not too late, maybe," replied his mother. "I think it wouldn't be hard to put him off of it ; the crathur's own heart's failin' him to lave us—he has sorrow upon his face where he lies."

The father looked at the expression of affectionate melancholy which shaded his features as he slept, and the perception of the boy's internal struggle against his own domestic attachments in accomplishing his first determination powerfully touched his heart.

"Vara," said he, "I know the boy—he won't give it up ; and 'twould be a pity—maybe a sin—to put him from it. Let the child get fair-play, an' thry his coorse. If he fails he can come back to us, an' our arms and hearts will be open to welcome him ! But if God prospers him, wouldn't it be a blessin' that we never expected to see him in the white robes, celebratin' one

¹ This alludes to a charm performed by certain persons, which, by means of a ribbon, is said to cure headaches in Ireland. It is called "measuring the head."

mass for his paarents? If these ould eyes could see that, I would be continted to close them in pace an' happiness for ever."

"An' well you'd become them, avourneen machree! Well would your mild and handsome countenance look wid the long heavenly stole of innocence upon you! and although it's atin' into my heart, I'll bear it for the sake of seein' the same blessed sight. Look at that face, Dominick; mightn't many a lord of the land be proud to have such a son? May the heavens shower down its blessin' upon him!"

The father burst into tears. "It is—it is!" said he. "It is the face that ud make many a noble heart proud to look at it! Is it any wondher it ud cut *our* hearts, thin, to have it taken from afore our eyes? Come away, Vara—come away, or I'll not be able to part wid it. It *is* the lovely face—an' kind is the heart of my darlin' child." As he spoke he stooped down and kissed the youth's cheek, on which the warm tears of affection fell soft as the dew from heaven. The mother followed his example, and they both left the room.

"We must bear it," said Dominick, as they passed into another apartment; "the money's gathered, an' it wouldn't look well to be goin' back wid it to them that befriended us. *We'd* have the blush upon our face for it, an' the child no advantage."

"Thru for you, Dominick; and we must make up our minds to live widout him for a while."

The following morning was dark and cloudy, but calm and without rain. When the family were all assembled, every member of it evinced traces of deep feeling, and every eye was fixed upon the serene but melancholy countenance of the boy with tenderness and sorrow. He himself maintained a quiet equanimity, which, though apparently liable to be broken by the struggles of domestic affection, and in character with his meek and unassuming disposition, yet was supported by more firmness than might be expected from a mind in which kindness and sensibility were so strongly predominant. At this time, however, his character was not developed, or at least not understood by those that surrounded him. To strong feelings and enduring affections he added a keenness of perception and a bitterness of invective, of which, in his conversation with his father concerning Yellow Sam, the reader has already had sufficient proofs. At breakfast little or nothing was eaten; the boy himself could not taste a morsel, nor any other person in the family. When the form of the meal was over, the father knelt down. "It's right," said he, "that we should all go to our knees, and join in a

Rosary in behalf of the child that's goin' on a good intintion. He won't thrive the worse bekase the last words that he'll hear from his father and mother's lips is a prayer for bringin' the blessin' of God down upon his endayvours."

This was accordingly performed, though not without tears and sobs and frequent demonstrations of grief; for religion among the peasantry is often associated with bursts of deep and powerful feeling.

When the prayer was over, the boy rose and calmly strapped to his back a satchel covered with deer-skin, containing a few books, linen, and a change of very plain apparel. While engaged in this the uproar of grief in the house was perfectly heartrending. When just ready to set out, he reverently took off his hat, knelt down, and, with tears streaming from his eyes, craved humbly and meekly the blessing and forgiveness of his father and mother. The mother caught him in her arms, kissed his lips, and, kneeling also, sobbed out a fervent benediction upon his head; the father now, in the grief of a strong man, pressed him to his heart until the big, burning tears fell upon the boy's face; his brothers and sisters embraced him wildly; next his more distant relations; and lastly the neighbours who were crowded about the door. After this he took a light staff in his hand, and, first blessing himself after the form of his Church, proceeded to a strange land in quest of education.

He had not gone more than a few perches from the door when his mother followed him with a small bottle of holy water. "Jimmy, *a lanna voght*,"¹ said she, "here's this, an' carry it about you—it will keep evil from you; an' be sure to take good care of the written correckther you got from the priest and Square Benson; an', darlin', don't be lookin' too often at the cuff o' your coat, for feard the people might get a notion that you have the bank-notes sewed in it. An', Jimmy agra, don't be too lavish upon their Munster crame; they say it's apt to give people the ague. Kiss me agin, agra; an' the heavens above keep you safe and well till we see you once more!"

She then tenderly, and still with melancholy pride, settled his shirt collar, which she thought did not sit well about his neck; and kissing him again, with renewed sorrow, left him to pursue his journey.

M'Evoy's house was situated on the side of a dark hill—one of that barren description which can be called neither inland nor mountain. It commanded a wide and extended prospect,

¹ My poor child.

and the road along which the lad travelled was visible for a considerable distance from it. On a small hillock before the door sat Dominick and his wife, who, as long as their son was visible, kept their eyes, which were nearly blinded with tears, riveted upon his person. It was now they gave full vent to their grief, and discussed, with painful and melancholy satisfaction, all the excellent qualities which he possessed. As James himself advanced, one neighbour after another fell away from the train which accompanied him, not, however, until they had affectionately embraced and bid him adieu, and perhaps slipped with peculiar delicacy an additional mite into his waistcoat pocket. After the neighbours, then followed the gradual separation from his friends—one by one left him, as in the great journey of life, and in a few hours he found himself accompanied only by his favourite brother.

This to him was the greatest trial he had yet felt; long and heartrending was their embrace. Jemmy soothed and comforted his beloved brother, but in vain. The lad threw himself on the spot at which they parted, and remained there until Jemmy turned an angle of the road which brought him out of his sight, when the poor boy kissed the marks of his brother's feet repeatedly, and then returned home, hoarse and broken down with the violence of his grief.

He was now alone, and for the first time felt keenly the strange object on which he was bent, together with all the difficulties connected with its attainment. He was young and uneducated, and many years, he knew, must elapse ere he could find himself in possession of his wishes. But time would pass at home as well as abroad, he thought; and as there lay no impediment of peculiar difficulty in his way, he collected all his firmness and proceeded.

There is no country on the earth in which either education, or the desire to procure it, is so much revered as in Ireland. Next to the claims of the priest and schoolmaster come those of the poor scholar for the respect of the people. It matters not how poor or how miserable he may be, so long as they see him struggling with poverty in the prosecution of a purpose so laudable, they will treat him with attention and kindness. Here there is no danger of his being sent to the workhouse, committed as a vagrant, or passed from parish to parish, until he reaches his own settlement. Here the humble lad is not met by the sneer of purse-proud insolence, or his simple tale answered only by the frown of heartless contempt. No—no—no. The best bit and sup are placed before him; and whilst

his poor but warm-hearted entertainer can afford only potatoes and salt to his own half-starved family, he will make a struggle to procure something better for the poor scholar, "*bekase he's far from his own, the crathur!*" An' sure the intintion in him is good, anyhow; the Lord prosper him, an' every one that has the heart set upon the larnin'!"

As Jemmy proceeded, he found that his satchel of books and apparel gave as clear an intimation of his purpose as if he had carried a label to that effect upon his back.

"God save you, a bouchal!" said a warm, honest-looking countryman whom he met driving home his cows in the evening, within a few miles of the town in which he purposed to sleep.

"God save you kindly!"

"Why, thin, 'tis a long journey you have before you, alanna, for I know well it's for Munster you're bound."

"Thru for you, 'tis there, wid the help of God, I'm goin'. A great scarcity of larnin' was in my own place, or I wouldn't have to go at all," said the boy, whilst his eyes filled with tears.

"'Tis no discredit in life," replied the countryman, with untaught natural delicacy, for he perceived that a sense of pride lingered about the boy, which made the character of poor scholar sit painfully upon him; "'tis no discredit, dear, nor don't be cast down. I'll warrant you that God will prosper you; an' that he may, avick, I pray this day!" and as he spoke he raised his hat in reverence to the Being whom he invoked. "An' tell me, dear—where do you intend to sleep to-night?"

"In the town forrid here," replied Jemmy. "I'm in hopes I'll be able to reach it before dark."

"Pooh! asy you will. Have you any friends or acquaintances there that ud welcome you, *a bouchal dhas* (my handsome boy)?"

"No, indeed," said Jemmy, "they're all strangers to me; but I can stop in 'dhry lodgin',' for it's chaper."

"Well, alanna, I believe you; but *I'm no stranger to you*—so come home wid me to-night; where you'll get a good bed, an' betther thratement nor in any of their dhry lodgin's. Give me your books, an' I'll carry them for you. Ethen, but you have a great batch o' them entirely. Can you make any hand o' the Latin at all yet?"

"No, indeed," replied Jemmy, somewhat sorrowfully; "I didn't ever open a Latin book, at all at all."

"Well, acushla, everything has a beginnin'; you won't be long. An' I know by your face that you'll be bright at it, an' a credit

to them that owes¹ you. There's my house in the fields beyant, where you'll be well kept for one night, anyway, or for twinty, or for ten times twinty, if you wanted them."

The honest farmer then commenced the song of *Colleen dhas Crotha na Mho*,² which he sang in a clear, mellow voice, until they reached the house.

"Alley," said the man to his wife on entering, "here's a stranger I've brought you."

"Well," replied Alley, "he's welcome sure, anyway. *Kead millia failta ghud*, alanna! sit over to the fire. Brian, get up, dear," said she to one of the children, "an' let the stranger to the hob."

"He's goin' on a good errand, the Lord bless him!" said the husband; "up the country for the larnin'. Put thim books over on the settle; an' whin the *girshas* are done milkin', give him a brave dhrink of the sweet milk; it's the stuff to thravel on."

"Throth, an' I will, wid a heart an' a half, wishin' it was betther I had to give him. Here, Nelly, put down a pot o' wather, an' lave soap an' a *praskeen*, afore you go to milk, till I bathe the dacent boy's feet. Sore an' tired they are after his journey, poor young crather."

When Jemmy placed himself upon the hob, he saw that some peculiarly good fortune had conducted him to so comfortable a resting-place. He considered this as a good omen, and felt, in fact, much relieved, for the sense of loneliness among strangers was removed.

The house evidently belonged to a wealthy farmer, well to do in the world; the chimney was studded with sides upon sides of yellow smoke-dried bacon, hams, and hung beef in abundance. The kitchen tables were large, and white as milk, and the dresser rich in its shining array of delf and pewter; everything, in fact, was upon a large scale. Huge meal chests were ranged on one side, and two or three settle beds on the other, conspicuous, as I have said, for their uncommon cleanliness; whilst hung from the ceiling were the *glaiks*, a machine for churning; and beside the dresser stood an immense churn, certainly too unwieldy to be managed except by machinery. The farmer was a ruddy-faced Milesian, who wore a drab frieze coat, with a velvet collar, buff waistcoat, corduroy small-clothes, and top-boots well greased from the tops down.³ He was not

¹ Owns.

² The pretty girl milking her cow.

³ This, almost in every instance, is the dress of a wealthy Irish farmer.

only an agriculturist, but a grazier, remarkable for shrewdness and good sense, generally attended fairs and markets, and brought three or four large droves of fat cattle to England every year. From his fob hung the brass chain and almost rusty key of a watch, which he kept certainly more for use than ornament.

"A little sup o' this," said he, "won't take your life," approaching Jemmy with a bottle of as good poteen as ever escaped the eye of an exciseman; "it'll refresh you, for you're tired, or I wouldn't offer it—rason that one bint on what you're bint on oughtn't to be makin' freedoms wid the same dhrink. But there's a time for everything, an' there's a time for this. Thank you, agra," he added, in reply to Jemmy, who had drank his health. "Now, don't be frettin', but make yourself as aisy as if you were at your own father's hearth. You'll have everything to your heart's contint for this night; the carts are goin' into the market to-morrow arly—you can sit upon them, an' maybe you'll get somethin' more nor you expect. Sure the Lord has given it to me, an' why wouldn't I share it wid them that wants it more nor I do?"

The lad's heart yearned to the generous farmer, for he felt that his kindness had the stamp of truth and sincerity upon it. He could only raise his eyes in a silent prayer that none belonging to him might ever be compelled, as strangers and wayfarers, to commit themselves, as he did, to the casualties of life, in pursuit of those attainments which poverty cannot otherwise command. Fervent, indeed, was his prayer; and certain we are that, because it was sincere, it must have been heard.

In the meantime the good woman, or *vanithee*, had got the pot of water warmed, in which Jemmy was made to put his feet. She then stripped up her arms to the elbows, and, with soap and seedy meal, affectionately bathed his legs and feet; then taking the praskeen, or coarse towel, she wiped them with a kindness which thrilled to his heart.

"And now," said she, "I must give you a cure for blisters, an' it's this: in the mornin', if we're all spared, as we will, plase the Almighty, I'll give you a needle an' some white woollen thread, well soaped. When your blisters gets up, dhraw the soapy thread through them, clip it on each side, an', my life for yours, they won't throuble you. Sure I thried it the year I went on my station to Lough Derg, an' I know it to be the rale cure."

"Here, Nelly," said the farmer—who sat with a placid,

benevolent face, smoking his pipe on the opposite hob—to one of the maids who came in from milking, “bring up a noggin of that milk; we want it here. Let it be none of your washy *foremilk*, but the *strippins*, Nelly, that has the strinth in it. Up wid it here, a colleen.”

“The never a one o’ the man but’s doatin’ downright, so he is,” observed the wife, “to go to fill the tired child’s stomach wid plash. Can’t you wait till he ates a thrifle o’ somethin’ stout, to keep life in him, after his hard journey? Does your feet feel themselves cool an’ asy now, a hagur?”

“Indeed,” said Jemmy, “I’m almost as fresh as when I set out. ’Twas little thought I had, when I came away this mornin’, that I’d meet wid so much friendship on my journey. I hope it’s a sign that God’s on my side in my undertakin’!”

“I hope so, avourneen—I hope so, an’ it is, too,” replied the farmer, taking the pipe out of his mouth, and mildly whiffing away the smoke, “an’ God’ll be always on your side, as long as your intentions are good. Now ate somethin’—you must want it by this; an’ thin, when you rest yourself bravely, take a tass into a good feather-bed, where you can sleep rings round you.¹ Who knows but you’ll be able to say mass for me or some o’ my family yit. God grant that, anyway, avick!”

Poor James’s heart was too full to eat much; he took, therefore, only a very slender portion of the refreshments set before him; but his hospitable entertainers had no notion of permitting him to use the free exercise of his discretion on this important point. When James put away the knife and fork, as an indication of his having concluded the meal, the farmer and his wife turned about, both at the same moment, with a kind of astonishment.

“Eh? is it givin’ over that way you are? Why, alanna, it’s nothin’ at all you’ve tuck; sure little Brian there would make a fool of you, so he would, at the atin’. Come, come, a bouchal; don’t be ashamed, or make any way sthrange at all, but ate hearty.”

“I declare I *have* ate heartily, thank you,” replied James; “oceans itself, so I did. I couldn’t swally a bit more if the house was full.”

“Arrah, Brian,” said the wife, “cut him up more o’ that hung beef; it’s ashamed the crathur is! Take it, avick; don’t we know the journey you had? Faix, if one o’ the boys was out on a day’s thravellin’, you’d see how he’d handle himself.”

¹ As much as you please.

"Indeed," said James, "I can't; if I could I would. Sure I would be no way backward at all, so I wouldn't."

"Throth, an' you can an' must," said the farmer; "the never a rise you'll rise till you finish that," putting over a complement out of all reasonable proportion with his age and size.

"There now's a small taste, an' you must finish it. To go to ate nothin' at all. Hut tut! by the tops o' my boots, you must put that clear an' clane out o' sight, or I'll go mad and burn them."

The lad recommenced, and continued to eat as long as he could possibly hold out; at length he ceased.

"I can't go on," said he; "don't ax me—I can't, indeed."

"Bad manners to the word I'll hear till you finish it; you know it's but a thrifle to spake of. Thry agin, avick, but take your time; you'll be able for it."

The poor lad's heart was engaged on other thoughts and other scenes—his home, and its beloved inmates; sorrow and the gush of young affections were ready to burst forth.

"I cannot ate," said he, and he looked imploringly on the farmer and his wife, whilst the tears started to his eyes; "don't ax me, for my heart's wid them I left behind me, that I may never see agin;" and he wept in a burst of grief which he could not restrain.

Neither the strength nor tenderness of the lad's affection was unappreciated by this excellent couple. In a moment the farmer's wife was also in tears; nor did her husband break the silence for some minutes.

"The Almighty pity an' strengthen him!" said the wife; "but he has the good an' the kind heart, an' would be a credit to any family. Whisht, acushla machree—whisht, we won't ax you to ate—no, indeed. It was out o' kindness we did it—don't be cast down aither; sure it isn't the ocean you're crossin', but goin' from one county like to another. God 'll guard an' take care o' you, so he will. Your intintion's good, an' he'll prosper it."

"He will, avick," said the farmer himself, "he will. Cheer up, my good boy! I know thim that's larned an' creditable clargy this day, that went as you're goin'—ay, an' that ris an' helped their paarents, an' put them above poverty an' distress; an' never fear, wid a blessing, but you'll do the same."

"That's what brings me at all," replied the boy, drying his tears; "if I was once able to take them out o' their distresses I'd be happy—only I'm afeard the cares o' the world will break my father's heart before I have it in my power to assist him."

"No such thing, darlin'," said the good woman. "Sure his hopes out o' you, an' his love for you will keep him up; an' you dunna but God may give him a blessin' too, avick."

"Mix another sup o' that for him," said the farmer; "he's low-spirited, an' it's too strong to give him any more of it as it is. Childhre, where's the masther from us—eh? Why, thin, God help them, the crathurs—wasn't it *thoughtful*¹ o' them to lave the place while he was at his dinner, for fraid he'd be dashed—manin' them young crathurs, Alley. But can you tell us where the masther is? Isn't this his night wid us? I know he tuck his dinner here."

"Ay did he; but it's up to Larry Murphy's he's gone, to thry his son in his book-keepin'. Mavrone, but he had time enough to put him well through it afore this, anyway."

As she spoke a short, thick-set man, with black twinkling eyes and ruddy cheeks, entered. This personage was no other than the schoolmaster of that district, who circulated, like a newspaper, from one farmer's house to another, in order to expound for his kind entertainers the news of the day, his own learning, and the very evident extent of their ignorance.

The moment he came in the farmer and his wife rose with an air of much deference, and placed a chair for him exactly opposite the fire, leaving a respectful distance on each side, within which no illiterate mortal durst presume to sit.

"Misther Corcoran," said the farmer, presenting Jemmy's satchel, through which the shapes of the books were quite plain, "*thig in thu shinn?*"² and as he spoke he looked significantly at its owner.

"Ah!" replied the man of letters, "*thigum, thigum*. God be wid the day when I carried the likes of it. 'Tis a badge of polite genius, that no boy need be ashamed of. So, my young suckling of litherature, you're bound for Munster?—for that counthry where the swallows fly in conic sections—where the magpies and the turkeys confab in Latin, and the cows and bullocks will roar you Doric Greek—bo-a-o—clamo. What's your pathronymic?—*quo nomine gowdes, Domine doctissime?*"

The lad was silent; but the farmer's wife turned up the whites of her eyes with an expression of wonder and surprise at the erudition of the "masther."

"I persave you are as yet uninitiated into the elementary *principia* of the languages; well, the honour is still before you. What's your name?"

¹ Considerate.

² You understand this?

"James M'Evoy, sir."

Just now the farmer's family began to assemble round the spacious hearth; the young lads, whose instruction the worthy teacher claimed as his own peculiar task, came timidly forward, together with two or three pretty, bashful girls, with sweet, flashing eyes, and countenances full of feeling and intelligence. Behind, on the settles, half-a-dozen servants of both sexes sat in pairs—each boy placing himself beside his favourite girl. These *appeared* to be as strongly interested in the learned conversation which the master held as if they were masters and mistresses of Munster Latin and Doric Greek themselves; but an occasional thump cautiously bestowed by no slender female hand upon the sturdy shoulder of her companion, or a dry cough from one of the young men, fabricated to drown the coming blow, gave slight indications that they contrived to have a little amusement among themselves, altogether independent of Mr. Corcoran's erudition.

When the latter came in, Jemmy was taking the tumbler of punch which the farmer's wife had mixed for him; on this he fixed an expressive glance, which instantly reverted to the *vanithee*, and from her to the large bottle which stood in a window to the right of the fire. It is a quick eye, however, that can anticipate Irish hospitality.

"Alley," said the farmer, ere the wife had time to comply with the hint conveyed by the black, twinkling eye of the school-master—"why, Alley——"

"Sure, I am," she replied, "an' will have it for you in less than no time."

She accordingly addressed herself to the bottle, and in a few minutes handed a reeking jug of punch to the *Farithee*, or good man.

"Come, masther, by the hand o' my body, I don't like dhry talk so long as I can get anything to moisten the discourse. Here's your health, masther," continued the farmer, winking at the rest, "and a speedy conclusion to what you know! In throth, she's the pick of a good girl—not to mintion what she has for her portion. I'm a frind to the same family, and will put a spoke in your wheel, masther, that'll sarve you."

"Oh, Mr. Lanigan, very well, sir—very well—you're becoming quite facetious upon me," said the little man, rather confused; "but upon my credit and reputation, except the amorous inclination in regard to me is on *her* side"—and he looked sheepishly at his hands—"I can't say that the arrows of Cupid

have as yet pinethrated the sintimintal side of my heart. It is not wid me as it was wid Dido—hem!—

“ ‘Non hæret lateri lethalis arundo,’

as Virgil says. Yet I can't say but if a friend were to become spokesman for me, and insinuate in my behalf a small taste of amorous sintimintality, why—hem, hem, hem! The company's health! Lad James M'Evoy, *your* health, and success to you, my good boy!—hem, hem!”

“Here's wishin' him the same!” said the farmer.

“James,” said the schoolmaster, “you are goin' to Munsther, an' I can say that I have travelled it from end to end, not to a bad purpose, I hope—hem! Well, a bouchal, there are hard days and nights before you, so keep a firm heart. If you have money, as 'tis likely you have, don't let a single rap of it into the hands of the schoolmaster, although the first thing he'll do will be to bring you home to his own house, and palaver you night an' day till he succeeds in persuading you to leave it in his hands for security. You might, if not duly pre-admonished, surrender it to his solicitations, for

“ ‘Nemo mortalium omnibus horis sapit.’

Michael, what case is *mortalium*?” added he, suddenly addressing one of the farmer's sons. “Come now, Michael, where's your brightness? What case is *mortalium*?”

The boy was taken by surprise, and for a few minutes could not reply.

“Come, man,” said the father, “be sharp, spake out bravely, an' don't be afeard: nor don't be in a hurry aither; we'll wait for you.”

“Let him alone—let him alone,” said Corcoran; “I'll face the same boy agin the country for *cuteness*. If he doesn't expound that, I'll never consthre a line of Latin, or Greek, or Masoretic, while I'm livin'.”

His cunning master knew right well that the boy, who was only confused at the suddenness of the question, would feel no difficulty in answering it to his satisfaction. Indeed, it was impossible for him to miss it, as he was then reading the seventh book of Virgil and the fourth of Homer. It is, however, a trick with such masters to put simple questions of that nature to their pupils, when at the houses of their parents, as knotty and difficult, and, when they are answered, to assume an

air of astonishment at the profound reach of thought displayed by the pupil.

When Michael recovered himself he instantly replied, "*Mortalium* is the ginitive case of *nemo*, by '*Nomina Partitiva*.'"

Corcoran laid down the tumbler, which he was in the act of raising to his lips, and looked at the lad with an air of surprise and delight, then at the farmer and his wife alternately, and shook his head with much mystery. "Michael," said he to the lad, "will you go out and tell us what the night's doin'?"

The boy accordingly went out. "Why," said Corcoran, in his absence, "if ever there was a phanix, and that boy will be the bird—an Irish phanix he will be; a

" 'Rara avis in terris, nigroque simillima cygno!'

There's no batin' him at anything he undhertakes. Why, there's thim that are makin' good bread by their larnin' that couldn't resolve that; and you all saw how he did it widout the book! Why, if he goes on at this rate, I'm afraid he'll soon be too many for myself!—hem!"

"Too many for yourself! Fill the masther's tumbler, Alley. Too many for yourself! No, no! I doubt he'll never see that day, bright as he is, an' cute. That's it—put a hape upon it. Give me your hand, masther. I thank you for your attintion to him; an' the boy *is* a credit to us. Come over, Michael, avourneen. Here, take what's in this tumbler, an' finish it. Be a good boy, an' mind your lessons, an' do everything the masther here—the Lord bless him!—bids you; an' you'll never want a frind, masther, nor a dinner, nor a bed, nor a guinea, while the Lord spares me aither the one or the other."

"I know it, Mr. Lanigan, I know it; and I will make that boy the pride o' Ireland, if I'm spared. I'll show him *cramboes* that would puzzle the great Scaliger himself; and many other difficulties I'll let him into that I have never let out yet, except to Tim Kearney, that bate them all at Thrinity College up in Dublin last June."

"Arrah, how was that, masther?"

"Tim, you see, went in to his entrance examinayshuns, and one of the Fellows came to examine him, but a divil a long time it was till Tim sacked him.

" 'Go back agin,' says Tim, 'and sind some one that's *able* to tache me, for you're *not*.'

"So another greater scholar agin came to thry Tim, and *did* thry him, and Tim made a hare of *him*, before all that was

in the place—five or six thousand ladies and gentlemen, at last!

“The great larned Fellows thin began to look odd enough; so they picked out the best scholar among them but one, and slipped him at Tim; but well becomes Tim, the never a long time it was till he had *him* too as dumb as a post. The Fellow went back.

“‘Gintlemen,’ says he to the rest, ‘we’ll be disgraced all out,’ says he, ‘for, except the Prowost sacks that Munsther spalpeen, he’ll bate us all, an’ we’ll never be able to hould up our heads afther.’

“Accordingly, the Prowost attacks Tim; and such a meetin’ as they had never was seen in Thrinity College since its establishment. At last, when they had been nine hours and a half at it, the Prowost put one word to him that Tim couldn’t expound, so he lost it by *one* word only. For the last two hours the Prowost carried an the examinayshun in Hebrew, thinking, you see, that he *had* Tim there; but he was mistaken, for Tim answered him in good Munsther Irish, and it so happened that they understood each other, for the two languages are first cousins, or, at all evints, close blood relations. Tim was then pronounced to be the best scholar in Ireland except the Prowost; though, among ourselves, they might have thought of the man that *taught* him. That, however, wasn’t all. A young lady fell in love wid Tim, and is to make him a present of herself and her great fortune (three estates) the moment he becomes a counsellor; and in the meantime she allows him thirty pounds a year to bear his expenses and live like a gentleman.

“Now to return to the youth in the corner: *Nemo mortalium omnibus horis sapit*. Jemmy, keep your money, or give it to the priest to keep, and it will be safest; but by no means let the Hyblean honey of the schoolmaster’s blarney deprive you of it, otherwise it will be a *vale, vale, longum vale* between you. *Crede experto!*”

“Masther,” said the farmer, “many a strange accident you met wid on yer thravels through Munsther?”

“No doubt of that, Mr. Lanigan. I and another boy thravelled it in society together. One day we were walking towards a gentleman’s house on the roadside, and it happened that we met the owner of it in the vicinity, although we didn’t know him to be such.

“‘*Salvete Domini!*’ said he, in good fresh Latin.

“‘*Tu sis salvus, quoque?*’ said I to him, for my comrade wasn’t cute, and I was always orathor.

“ ‘*Unde venitis?*’ said he, comin’ over us wid another deep piece of larnin’, the construction of which was ‘Where do yees come from?’

“ I replied, ‘*Per varios casus et tot discrimina rerum, venimus a Mayo.*’

“ ‘Good!’ said he; ‘you’re bright; follow me.’

“ So he brought us over to his own house, and ordered us bread and cheese and a posset; for it was Friday, an’ we couldn’t touch mate. He, in the manetime, sat an’ chatted along wid us. The thievin’ cook, however, in making the posset, kept the curds to herself, except a slight taste here and there that floated on the top; but she was liberal enough of the whey, anyhow.

“ Now I had been well trained to fishing in my more youthful days; and no gorsoon could grope a trout wid me. I accordingly sent the spoon through the pond before me wid the skill of a connoisseur; but to no purpose—it came up wid nothin’ but the whey.

“ So said I off-hand to the gentleman, houlding up the bowl, and looking at it with a disappointed face—

“ ‘Apparent *rari* nantes in gurgite vasto.’

‘This,’ says I, ‘plase your hospitality, may be Pactolus, but the divil a taste o’ the proper sand is in the bottom of it.’

“ The wit of this, you see, pleased him, and we got an excellent treat in his *studium*, or study; for he was determined to give myself another trial.

“ ‘What’s the wickedest line in Virgil?’ said he.

“ Now I had Virgil at my finger ends, so I answered him—

“ ‘*Flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta movebo.*’

“ ‘Very good,’ said he, ‘you have the genius, and will come to somethin’ yet; now tell me the most moral line in Virgil.’

“ I answered—

“ ‘*Discere justitiam moniti, et non temnere divos.*’¹

“ ‘Depend upon it,’ said he, ‘you will be a luminary. The morning star will be but a farthing candle to you; and if you

¹ He is evidently drawing the long bow here; this anecdote has been told before.

take in the learning as you do the cheese, in a short time there won't be a man in Munsther fit to teach you,' and he laughed, for you see he had a tendency to jocosity.

"He did not give me up here, however, being determined to go deeper wid me.

"Can you translate a newspaper into Latin prose?' said he.

"Now the divil a one o' me was just then sure about the prose, so I was goin' to tell him; but before I had time to speak he thrust the paper into my hand, and desired me to thranslate half-a-dozen barbarous advertisements.

"The first that met me was about a reward offered for a Newfoundland dog and a terrier, that had been stolen from a fishing-tackle manufacturer, and then came a list of his shabby merchandise, ending with a long-winded encomium upon his gunpowder, shot, and double-barrelled guns. Now may I be shot wid a blank cartridge if I ever felt so much at an amplash in my life, and I said so.

"Your honour has hooked me wid the fishing-hooks,' said I; 'but I grant the cheese was good bait, anyhow.'

"So he laughed heartily, and bid me go on.

"Well, I thought the first was difficult; but the second was Masoretic to it—something about drawbacks, excisemen, and a long custom-house list, that would puzzle Publius Virgilius Maro, if he was set to translate it. However, I went through wid it as well as I could; where I couldn't find Latin I laid in the Greek, and where the Greek failed me I gave the Irish, which, to tell the truth, in consequence of its vernacularity, I found to be the most convanient. Och, och, many a larned scrimmage I have signalised myself in during my time. Sure my name's as common as a mail-coach in Thrinity College; and 'tis well known there isn't a Fellow in it but I could sack, except maybe the Prowost. That's their own opinion. 'Corcoran,' says the Prowost, 'is the most larned man in Ireland; an' I'm not ashamed,' says he, 'to acknowledge that I'd rather decline meeting him upon deep points.' Ginteels, all your healths—hem! But among ourselves I could bog him in a very short time; though I'd scorn to deprive the gentleman of his reputation or his place, even if he sent me a challenge of larnin' to-morrow, although he's too cute to venture on doing *that*—hem, hem!"

To hear an obscure creature, whose name was but faintly known in the remote parts even of the parish in which he lived, draw the long bow at such a rate was highly amusing. The credulous character of his auditory, however, was no slight

temptation to him ; for he knew that next to the legends of their saints, or the Gospel itself, his fictions ranked in authenticity ; and he was determined that it should not be his fault if their opinion of his learning and talents was not raised to the highest point.

The feeling experienced by the poor scholar when he awoke the next morning was one both of satisfaction and sorrow. He thought once more of his home and kindred, and reflected that it might be possible he had seen the last of his beloved relations. His grief, however, was checked when he remembered the warm and paternal affection with which he was received on the preceding night by his hospitable countryman. He offered up his prayers to God ; humbly besought his grace and protection ; nor did he forget to implore a blessing upon those who had thus soothed his early sorrows, and afforded him, though a stranger and friendless, shelter, comfort, and sympathy.

"I hope," thought he, "that I will meet many such, till I overcome my difficulties, an' find myself able to assist my poor father an' mother !"

And he did meet many such among the humble, and despised, and neglected of his countrymen ; for—and we say it with pride—the character of this excellent farmer is thoroughly that of our peasantry within the range of domestic life.

When he had eaten a comfortable breakfast, and seen his satchel stuffed with provision for his journey, the farmer brought him up to his own room, in which were also his wife and children.

"God," said he, "has been good to me, blessed be his holy name !—betther, it appears, in one sinse, than he has been to you, dear—though, maybe, I don't desarve it as well. But no matther, acushla ; *I* have it, an' *you* want it ; so here's a thrifle to help you forrid in your larnin' ; an' all I ax from you is to offer up a bit of prayer for me of an odd time, an' if ever you live to be a priest, to say, if it wouldn't be troublesome, one mass for me an' those that you see about me. It's not much, James agra—only two guineas. They may stand your friend whin friends will be scarce wid you ; though I hope that won't be the case aither."

The tears were already streaming down Jemmy's cheeks. "Oh," said the artless boy, "God for ever reward you ! but sure I have a great dale of money in the—in the—cuff o' my coat. Indeed I have, an' I won't want it !"

The farmer, affected by the utter simplicity of the lad, looked at his wife and smiled, although a tear stood in his eye at the

time. She wiped her eyes with her apron, and backed the kind offer of her husband.

"Take it, asthore," she added. "In your cuff! Musha, God help you! sure it's not much you or the likes of you can have in your cuff, avourneen! Don't be ashamed, but take it; we can well afford it, glory be to God for it! It's not, agra, bekase you're goin' the way you are—though that same's an honour to you—but bekase our hearts warmed to you, that we offered it, an' bekase we would wish you to be thinkin' of us now an' thin, when you're in a strange part of the country. Let me open your pocket an' put them into it. That's a good boy; thank you, an' God bless an' prosper you! I'm sure you wor always biddable."

"Now, childhre," said the farmer, addressing his sons and daughters, "never see the sthranger widout a frind, nor wantin' a bed or a dinner, when you grow up to be men an' women. There's many a turn in this world; we may be sthrangers ourselves; an' think of what I would feel if any of you was far from me, widout money or friends, when I'd hear that you met a father in a strange counthry, that lightened your hearts by his kindness. Now, dear, the carts 'll be ready in no time—eh? Why, there they are at the gate waitin' for you. Get into one of them, an' they'll lave you in the next town. Come, man, bud-an'-age, be stout-hearted, an' don't cry—sure we did nothin' for you to spake of."

He shook the poor scholar by the hand, and, drawing his hat over his eyes, passed hurriedly out of the room. Alley stooped down, kissed his lips, and wept; and the children each embraced him with that mingled feeling of compassion and respect which is uniformly entertained for the poor scholar in Ireland.

The boy felt as if he had been again separated from his parents; with a sobbing bosom and wet cheeks he bid them farewell, and, mounting one of the carts, was soon beyond sight and hearing of the kind-hearted farmer and his family.

When the cart had proceeded about a mile it stopped, and one of the men who accompanied it, addressing a boy who passed with two sods of turf under his arm, desired him to hurry on and inform his master that they waited for him.

"Tell Misther Corcoran to come into coort," said the man, laughing; "my lordship's waitin' to hear his defince for intindin' *not* to run away wid Miss Judy Malowny. Tell him Lord *Carty's* ready to pass sintince on him for not stalin' the heart of her wid his Rule o' Three. Ha! by the holy farmer,

you'll get it for stayin' from school to this hour. Be quick, a bouchal!"

In a few minutes the trembling urchin, glad of any message that might serve to divert the dreaded birch from himself, entered the uproarious "Siminary," caught his forelock, bobbed down his head to the master, and pitched his two sods into a little heap of turf which lay in the corner of the school.

"Arrah, Pat Roach, is this an hour to inter into my establishment wid impunity? Eh, you Rosicrucian?"

"Masther, sir," replied the adroit monkey, "I've a message for you, sir, i' you plase."

"An' what might the message be, Masther Pat Roach? To dine to-day wid your worthy father, a bouchal?"

"No, sir; it's from one o' Mr. Lanigan's boys—him that belongs to the carts, sir; he wants to spake to you, sir, i' you plase."

"An' do you give that by way of an apologetical oration for your absence from the advantages of my tuition until this hour? However, *non constat, Patrici*; I'll pluck the crow wid you on my return. If you don't find yourself a well-flogged youth for your 'mitchin,' never say that this right hand can administer condign punishment to that part of your physical theory which constitutes the antithesis to your *vacuum caput*. *En et ecce*, you villain," he added, pointing to the birch, "it's newly cut and trimmed, and pregnant wid alacrity for the operation. I correct, Patricius, on fundamental principles, which you'll soon *feel* to your cost."

"Masther, sir," replied the lad, in a friendly, conciliating tone, "my fadher ud be obliged to you if you'd take share of a fat goose wid him to-morrow."

"Go to your sate, Paddy, avourneen; divil a dacent boy in the siminary I joke so much wid as I do wid yourself; an' all out of respect for your worthy parents. Faith, I've a great regard for them, all out, an' tell them so."

He then proceeded to the carts, and, approaching Jemmy, gave him such advice touching his conduct in Munster as he considered to be most serviceable to an inexperienced lad of his years.

"Here," said the kind-hearted soul—"here, James, is my mite. It's but bare ten shillings; but if I could make it a pound for you, it would give me a degree of delectability which I have not enjoyed for a long time. The truth is, there's something like the *nodus matrimonii*, or what they facetiously term the priest's gallows, dangling over my head, so that any

little thrifle I may get must be kept together for that crisis, James, a bouchal; so that must be my apology for not giving you more, joined to the naked fact that I never was remarkable for a superfluity of cash under any circumstances. Remember what I told you last night. Don't let a shilling of your money into the hands of the masther you settle wid. Give it to the parish priest, and dhraw it from him when you want it. Don't join the parties or the factions of the school. Above all, spake ill of nobody; and if the masther is harsh upon you, either bear it patiently, or mintion it to the priest, or to some other person of respectability in the parish, and you'll be protected. You'll be apt to meet cruelty enough, my good boy; for there are larned Neros in Munster who'd flog if the province was in flames.

"Now, James, I'll tell you what you'll do when you reach the larned south. Plant yourself on the highest hill in the neighbourhood wherein the academician with whom you intend to stop lives. Let the hour of reconnoitring be that in which dinner is preparing. When seated there, James, take a survey of the smoke that ascends from the chimneys of the farmers' houses, and be sure to direct your steps to that from which the highest and merriest column issues. This is the old plan, and it is a sure one. The highest smoke rises from the largest fire, the largest fire boils the biggest pot, the biggest pot generally holds the fattest bacon, and the fattest bacon is kept by the richest farmer. It's a wholesome and comfortable *climax*, my boy, and one by which I myself was enabled to keep a dacent portion of educated flesh between the master's birch and my ribs. The science itself is called Gastric Geography, and is peculiar only to itinerant young gentlemen who seek for knowledge in the classical province of Munster.

"Here's a book that thravelled along wid myself through all peregrinations—Creech's Translation of Horace. Keep it for my sake; and when you accomplish your education, if you return home this way, I'd thank you to give me a call. Farewell! God bless you and prosper you as I wish, and as I am sure you deserve."

He shook the lad by the hand; and as it was probable that his own former struggles with poverty, when in the pursuit of education, came with all the power of awakened recollection to his mind, he hastily drew his hand across his eyes, and returned to resume the brief but harmless authority of the ferula.

After arriving at the next town, Jemmy found himself once more prosecuting his journey alone. In proportion as he

advanced into a strange land his spirits became depressed, and his heart cleaved more and more to those whom he had left behind him. There is, however, an enthusiasm in the visions of youth, in the speculations of a young heart, which frequently overcomes difficulties that a mind taught by the experience of life would often shrink from encountering. We may all remember the utter recklessness of danger with which, in our youthful days, we crossed floods, or stood upon the brow of yawning precipices—feats which, in after years, the wealth of kingdoms could not induce us to perform. Experience, as well as conscience, makes cowards of us all.

The poor scholar in the course of his journey had the satisfaction of finding himself an object of kind and hospitable attention to his countrymen. His satchel of books was literally a passport to their hearts. For instance, as he wended his solitary way, depressed and travel-worn, he was frequently accosted by labourers from behind a ditch on the roadside, and, after giving a brief history of the object he had in view, brought, if it was dinner-hour, to some farm-house or cabin, where he was made to partake of their meal. Even those poor creatures who gain a scanty subsistence by keeping what are called “dhry lodgin’s,” like *lucus a non lucendo*, because they never keep out the rain, and have mostly a bottle of whisky for those who know *how* to call for it—even they, in most instances, not only refused to charge the poor scholar for his bed, but declined receiving any remuneration for his subsistence.

“Och, och, no! you poor young crathur; not from *you*. No, no; if we wouldn’t help the likes o’ you, who ought we to help? No, dear; but instead o’ the *airighad*,¹ jist lave us your blessin’, an’ maybe we’ll thrive as well wid that as we would wid your little pences, that you’ll be wantin’ for yourself, whin your frinds won’t be near to help you.”

Many, in fact, were the little marks of kindness and attention which the poor lad received on his way. Sometimes a ragged peasant, if he happened to be his fellow-traveller, would carry his satchel so long as they travelled together; or a carman would give him a lift on his empty car; or some humorous postilion, or tipsy “shay-boy,” with a comical leer in his eye, would shove him into his vehicle, remarking—

“Bedad, let nobody say you’re a poor scholar *now*, an’ you goin’ to school in a coach! Be the piper that played afore Moses, if ever any rascal upbraids you wid it, tell him, says

¹ Money.

you—'You damned rap,' says you, 'I wint to school in a coach! an' that,' says you, 'was what none o' yer beggerly gination was ever able to do,' says you; 'an' moreover, be the same token,' says you, 'be the holy farmer, if you bring it up to me, I'll make a third eye in your forehead wid the butt o' this whip,' says you. Whish! darlin's! That's the go! There's drivin', Barny! eh?"

At length, after much toil and travel, he reached the south, having experienced as he proceeded a series of affectionate attentions, which had, at least, the effect of reconciling him to the measure he had taken, and impressing upon his heart a deeper confidence in the kindness and hospitality of his countrymen.

Upon the evening of the day on which he terminated his journey twilight was nearly falling. The town in which he intended to stop for the night was not a quarter of a mile before him, yet he was scarcely able to reach it; his short, yielding steps were evidently those of a young and fatigued traveller; his brow was moist with perspiration; he had just begun, too, to consider in what manner he should introduce himself to the master who taught the school at which he had been advised to stop, when he heard a step behind him, and on looking back he discovered a tall, well-made, ruddy-faced young man, dressed in black, with a book in his hand, walking after him.

"*Unde et quo, viator?*" said the stranger, on coming up with him.

"Oh, sir," replied Jemmy, "I have not Latin *yet*."

"You are on your way to seek it, however," replied the other. "Have you travelled far?"

"A long way, indeed, sir; I came from the county —, sir—the upper part of it."

"Have you letters from your parish priest?"

"I have, sir, and one from my father's landlord, Square Benson, if you ever heard of him."

"What's your object in learning Latin?"

"To be a priest, sir, wid the help o' God, an' to rise my poor father an' mother out of their poverty."

His companion, after hearing this reply, bent a glance upon him that indicated the awakening of an interest in the lad much greater than he probably otherwise would have felt.

"It's only of late," continued the boy, "that my father and mother got poor; they were once very well to do in the world. But they were put out o' their farm in ordher that the agint might

put a man that had married a *get*¹ of his own into it. My father intended to lay his case before Colonel B——, the landlord ; but he couldn't see him at all, bekase he never comes near the estate. The agint's called Yellow Sam, sir ; he's rich through cheaters and dishonesty ; puts money out at intherest, then goes to law, and brakes the people entirely ; for, somehow, he never was known to lose a lawsuit at all, sir. They say it's the divil, sir, that keeps the lawyers on his side ; and that when he an' the lawyers do be dhrawin' up their writin's, the divil—God betune me an' harm !—does be helpin' them."

"And is Colonel B—— actually—or, rather, was he—your father's landlord ?"

"He was, indeed, sir ; it's thruth I'm tellin' you."

"Singular enough ! Stand beside me here—do you see that large house to the right among the trees ?"

"I do, sir ; a great big house entirely ; like a castle, sir."

"The same. Well, that house belongs to Colonel B——, and I am very intimate with him. I am Catholic curate of this parish ; and I was, before my ordination, private tutor in his family for four years."

"Maybe, sir, you might have intherest to get my father back into his farm ?"

"I do not know that, my good lad, for I am told Colonel B—— is rather embarrassed, and, if I mistake not, in the power of the man you call Yellow Sam, who has, I believe, heavy mortgages upon his property. But no matter ; if I cannot help your father, I shall be able to serve yourself. Where do you intend to stop for the night ?"

"In dhry lodgin', sir ; that's where my father and mother bid me stop always. They war very kind to me, sir, in the dhry lodgin's."

"Who is there in Ireland who would not be kind *to you*, my good boy ? I trust you do not neglect your religious duties ?"

"Wid the help o' God, sir, I strive to attind to them as well as I can ; particularly since I left my father and mother. Every night an' mornin', sir, I say five pathers, five aves, an' a creed ; an' sometimes when I'm walkin' the road I slip up an odd pather, sir, an' ave, that God may grant me good luck."

The priest smiled at his candour and artlessness, and could not help feeling the interest which the boy had already excited in him increase.

"You do right," said he, "and take care that you neglect not

¹ A term implying illegitimacy.

the worship of God. Avoid bad company ; be not quarrelsome at school ; study to improve yourself diligently ; attend mass regularly, and be punctual in going to confession."

After some further conversation, the priest and he entered the town together.

"This is my house," said the former ; "or, if not altogether mine, at least that in which I lodge ; let me see you here at two o'clock to-morrow. In the meantime follow me, and I shall place you with a family where you will experience every kindness and attention that can make you comfortable."

He then led him a few doors up the street, till he stopped at a decent-looking "house of entertainment," to the proprietors of which he introduced him.

"Be kind to this strange boy," said the worthy clergyman, "and whatever the charges of his board and lodging may be until we get him settled, I shall be accountable for them."

"God forbid, your reverence, that ever a penny belongin' to a poor boy looking for his larnin' should go into our pockets, if he was wid us twelve months in the year. No—no ! he can stay with the bouchaleens ;¹ let them be thryin' one another in their books. If he is fardher on in the Latin than Andy, he can help Andy ; an' if Andy has the foreway of him, why Andy can help him. Come here, boys, all of yees. Here's a comarade for yees—a dacent boy that's lookin' for his larnin' ; the Lord enable him ! Now be kind to him, an' whisper," he added in an undertone, "don't be bringin' a blush to the gorsoon's face. Do yees hear ? Ma chorp ! if yees do ! Now mind it. Yees know what I can do whin I'm vexed ! Go, now, an' git him somethin' to ate an' dhrink, an' let him sleep wid Barney in the feather-bed."

During the course of the next day the benevolent curate introduced him to the parish priest, who, from the frequent claims urged by poor scholars upon his patronage, felt no particular interest in his case. He wrote a short letter, however, to the master with whom Jemmy intended to become a pupil, stating that "he was an honest boy, the son of *legitimate parents*, and worthy of consideration."

The curate, who saw further into the boy's character than the parish priest, accompanied him on the following day to the school ; introduced him to the master in the most favourable manner, and recommended him in general to the hospitable care of all the pupils. This introduction did not serve the boy so

¹ Little boys.

much as might have been expected ; there was nothing particular in the letter of the *parish* priest, and the curate was *but* a curate—no formidable personage in *any* church, where the good-will of the rector has not been already secured.

Jemmy returned that day to his lodgings, and the next morning, with his Latin grammar under his arm, he went to the school to taste the first bitter fruits of the tree of knowledge.

On entering it, which he did with a beating heart, he found the despot of a hundred subjects sitting behind a desk, with his hat on, a brow superciliously severe, and his nose crimped into a most cutting and vinegar curl. The truth was, the master knew the character of the curate, and felt that, because he had taken Jemmy under his protection, no opportunity remained for him of fleecing the boy, under the pretence of securing his money, and that consequently the arrival of the poor scholar would be no windfall, as he had expected.

When Jemmy entered, he looked first at the master for his welcome ; but the master, who verified the proverb that there are none so blind as those who will not see, took no notice whatsoever of him. The boy then looked timidly about the school in quest of a friendly face, and, indeed, few faces except friendly ones were turned upon him.

Several of the scholars rose up simultaneously to speak to him ; but the pedagogue angrily inquired why they had left their seats and their business.

"Why, sir," said a young Munsterman, with a fine Milesian face—"be Gorra, sir, I believe if *we* don't welcome the poor scholar, I think *you* won't. This is the boy, sir, that Mr. O'Brien came along wid yistherday, an' spoke so well of."

"I know that, Thady ; and Misther O'Brien thinks, because he himself first passed through that overgrown hedge-school, wid slates upon the roof of it, called Thrinity College, and matriculated in Maynooth afther, that he has legal authority to recommend every young vagrant to the gratuitous benefits of legitimate classicality. An', I suppose, that you are acting the pathrun, too, Thady, and intend to take this young wild-goose under your protection?"

"Why, sir, isn't he a poor scholar? Sure he mustn't want his bit an' sup, nor his night's lod gin', anyhow. You'reto give him his larnin' only, sir."

"I suppose so, Mr. Thaddeus ; but this is the penalty of celebrity. If I weren't so celebrated a man for classics as I am I would have none of this work. I tell you, Thady, if I had fifty sons I wouldn't make one o' them *celebrated*."

"Wait till you have one first, sir, and you may make him as great a numskull as you please, masther."

"But in the meantime, Thady, I'll have no dictation from you as to whether I'll have one or fifty; or as to whether he'll be an ass or a Newton. I say that a dearth of larnin' is like a year of famine in Ireland. When the people are hard pushed, they bleed the fattest bullocks, an' live on their blood; an' so it is wid us academicians. It's always he that has the most larned blood in his veins, and the greatest quantity of it, that such hungry leeches fasten on."

"Thru for you, sir," said the youth, with a smile; "but they say the bullocks always fatten the bettther for it. I hope you'll bleed well now, sir."

"Thady, I don't like the curl of your nose; an', moreover, I have always found you prone to sedition. You remember your conduct at the 'barring out.' I tell you it's well that your worthy father is a dacent, wealthy man, or I'd be apt to give you a *memoria technica* on the *subtratum*, Thady."

"God be praised for my father's wealth, sir! But I'd never wish to have a good memory in the way you mention."

"Faith, an' I'll be apt to add that to your other qualities, if you don't take care of yourself."

"I want no such addition, masther! if you do, you'll be apt to subtract yourself from this neighbourhood, an', maybe, there won't be more than a cypher gone out of it, after all."

"Thady, you're a wag," exclaimed the crestfallen pedagogue; "take the lad to your own sate, and show him his task. How is your sister's sore throat, Thady?"

"Why, sir," replied the benevolent young wit, "she's bettther than I am. She can *swallow* more, sir."

"Not of larnin', Thady; there you've the widest gullet in the parish."

"My father's the richest man in it, masther," replied Thady. "I think, sir, my gullet and his purse are much about the same size—wid *you*."

"Thady, you're first-rate at a reply, but exceedingly deficient in the retort courteous. Take the lad to your sate, I say, and see how far he is advanced, and what he is fit for. I suppose, as you are so ginerous, you will volunteer to tache him yourself."

"I'll do that wid pleasure, sir; but I'd like to know whether *you* intind to tache him or not."

"An' I'd like to know, Thady, who's to pay me for it if I do. A purty return Michael Rooney made me for making him such

a linguist as he is. 'You're a tyrant,' said he, when he grew up, 'and instead of expecting me to thank you for your instructions, you ought to thank me for not preparing you for the county hospital, as a memento of the cruelty and brutality you made me feel when I had the misfortune to be a poor scholar under you.' And so, because he became curate of the parish, he showed me the outside of it."

"But will you tache this poor young boy, sir?"

"Let me know who's to guarantee his payments?"

"I have money myself, sir, to pay you for two years," replied Jemmy. "They told me, sir, that you were a great scholar, and I refused to stop in other schools by rason of the name you have for Latin an' Greek."

"*Verbum sat*," exclaimed the barefaced knave. "Come here. Now, you see, I persave you have dacency. Here is your task: get that half-page by heart. You have a cute look, an' I've no doubt but the stuff's in you. Come to me afther dismiss, till we have a little talk together."

He accordingly pointed out his task, after which he placed him at his side, lest the inexperienced boy might be put on his guard by any of the scholars. In this intention, however, he was frustrated by Thady, who, as he thoroughly detested the knavish tyrant, resolved to caution the poor scholar against his dishonesty. Thady, indeed, most heartily despised the mercenary pedagogue, not only for his obsequiousness to the rich, but on account of his severity to the children of the poor. About two o'clock the young wag went out for a few minutes, and immediately returned in great haste to inform the master that Mr. Delany, the parish priest, and two other gentlemen, wished to see him over at the Cross Keys, an inn which was kept at a place called the Nine-Mile House, within a few perches of the school. The parish priest, though an ignorant, insipid old dunce, was the master's patron, and his slightest wish a divine law to him. The little despot, forgetting his prey, instantly repaired to the Cross Keys, and in his absence, Thady, together with the larger boys of the school, made M'Evoy acquainted with the fraud about to be practised on him.

"His intintion," said they, "is to keep you at home to-night, in ordher to get whatever money you have into his own hands, that he may keep it safe for you; but if you give him a penny you may bid farewell to it. Put it in the curate's hands," added Thady, "or in my father's, an' thin it'll be safe. At all evints, don't stay wid him this night. He'll take your money, and then turn you off in three or four weeks."

"I didn't intend to give him my money," replied Jemmy; "a schoolmaster I met on my way here bid me not to do it. I'll give it to the priest."

"Give it to the curate," said Thady—"wid him it'll be safe; for the parish priest doesn't like to trouble himself wid anything of the kind."

This was agreed upon; the boy was prepared against the designs of the master, and a plan laid down for his future conduct. In the meantime the latter re-entered the school in a glow of indignation and disappointment.

Thady, however, disregarded him; and as the master knew that the influence of the boy's father could at any time remove him from the parish, his anger subsided without any very violent consequences. The parish priest was his avowed patron, it is true; but if the parish priest knew that Mr. O'Rorke was dissatisfied with him, that moment he would join Mr. O'Rorke in expelling him from the neighbourhood. Mr. O'Rorke was a wealthy and hospitable man, but the schoolmaster was neither the one nor the other.

During school-hours that day many a warm-hearted urchin entered into conversation with the poor scholar: some moved by curiosity to hear his brief and simple history; others anxious to offer him a temporary asylum in their fathers' houses; and several to know if he had the requisite books, assuring him that if he had not, they would lend them to him. These proofs of artless generosity touched the homeless youth's heart the more acutely, inasmuch as he could perceive but too clearly that the eye of the master rested upon him, from time to time, with no auspicious glance.

When the scholars were dismissed, a scene occurred which was calculated to produce a smile, although it certainly placed the poor scholar in a predicament by no means agreeable. It resulted from a contest among the boys as to who should first bring him home. The master, who, by that cunning for which the knavish are remarkable, had discovered in the course of the day that his design upon the boy's money was understood, did not ask him to his house. The contest was, therefore, among the scholars, who, when the master had disappeared from the schoolroom, formed themselves into a circle, of which Jemmy was the centre, each pressing his claim to secure him.

"The right's wid me," exclaimed Thady. "I stood to him all day, an' I say I'll have him for this night. Come wid me, Jimmy. Didn't I do most for you to-day?"

"I'll never forget your kindness," replied poor Jemmy, quite alarmed at the boisterous symptoms of pugilism which already began to appear. In fact, many a tiny fist was shut, as a suitable accompaniment to the arguments with which they enforced their assumed rights.

"There now," continued Thady, "that puts an ind to it; he says he'll never forget my kindness. That's enough; come wid me, Jimmy."

"*Is it enough?*" said a lad who, if his father was less wealthy than Thady's, was resolved to put strength of arm against strength of purse. "Maybe it isn't enough! *I* say I bar it, if your fadher was fifty times as rich! Rich! Arrah, don't be comin' over us in regard of your riches, man alive! I'll bring the strange boy home this very night, an' it isn't your fadher's dirty money that'll prevint me!"

"I'd advise you to get a double ditch about your nose," replied Thady, "before you begin to say anything disrespectful against my father. Don't think to ballyrag over me. *I'll* bring the boy, for I have the best right to him. Didn't I *do*¹ the masher on his account?"

"A double ditch about my nose?"

"Ay!"

"Are you able to fight me?"

"I'm able to thry it, anyhow, an' willin' too."

"Do you *say* you're able to fight me?"

"I'll bring the boy home, whether or not."

"Thady's not your match, Jack Ratigan," said another boy. "Why don't you challenge your match?"

"If *you* say a word, I'll half-sole your eye. Let him *say* whether he's able to fight me like a man or not. That's the chat."

"Half-sole my eye! Thin here I am, an' why don't you do it? You're crowin' over a boy that you're bigger than. *I'll* fight you for Thady. Now half-sole my eye, if you dar! Eh? Here's my eye now! Arrah, be the holy man, I'd—— Don't we know the white hen's in you? Didn't Barny Murtagh cow you at the black pool on Thursday last, whin we wor bathin'?"

"Come, Ratigan," said Thady, "peel an' turn out. I say I *am* able to fight you; an' I'll make you ate your words against my father, by way of givin' you your dinner. An' I'll make the dacent strange boy walk home wid me over your body—that is, if he'd not be afraid to dirty his feet."

¹ Outwit.

Ratigan and Thady immediately set to, and in a few minutes there were scarcely a little pair of fists present that were not at work, either on behalf of the two combatants, or with a view to determine their own private rights in being the first to exercise hospitality towards the amazed poor scholar. The fact was, that while the two largest boys were arguing the point, about thirty or forty minor disputes all ran parallel to theirs, and their mode of decision was immediately adopted by the pugnacious urchins of the school. In this manner they were engaged, poor Jemmy attempting to tranquillise and separate them, when the master, armed in all his terrors, presented himself.

With the tact of a sly old disciplinarian, he first secured the door, and instantly commenced the agreeable task of promiscuous castigation. Heavy and vindictive did his arm descend upon those whom he suspected to have cautioned the boy against his rapacity; nor amongst the warm-hearted lads whom he thwacked so cunningly was Thady passed over with a tender hand. Springs, bouncings, doublings, blowing of fingers, scratching of heads, and rubbing of elbows—shouts of pain, and doleful exclamations, accompanied by action that displayed surpassing agility—marked the effect with which he plied the instrument of punishment. In the meantime the spirit of reaction, to use a modern phrase, began to set in. The master, while thus engaged in dispensing justice, first received a rather vigorous thwack on the ear from behind by an anonymous contributor, who gifted him with what is called a musical ear, for it sang during five minutes afterwards. The monarch, when turning round to ascertain the traitor, received another insult on the most indefensible side, and that with a cordiality of manner that induced him to send his right hand reconnoitring the invaded part. He wheeled round a second time with more alacrity than before; but nothing less than the head of Janus could have secured him on the occasion. The anonymous contributor sent him a fresh article. This was supported by another kick behind; the turf began to fly; one after another came in contact with his head and shoulders so rapidly that he found himself, instead of being the assailant, actually placed upon his defence. The insurrection spread, the turf flew more thickly; his subjects closed in upon him in a more compact body; every little fist itched to be at him; the larger boys boldly laid in the facers, punched him in the stomach, treated him most opprobriously behind, every kick and cuff accompanied by a memento of his cruelty; in short, they compelled

him, like Charles the Tenth, ignominiously to fly from his dominions.

On finding the throne vacant, some of them suggested that it ought to be overturned altogether. Thady, however, who was the ringleader of the rebellion, persuaded them to be satisfied with what they had accomplished, and consequently succeeded in preventing them from destroying the fixtures.

Again they surrounded the poor scholar, who, feeling himself the cause of the insurrection, appeared an object of much pity. Such was his grief that he could scarcely reply to them. Their consolation on witnessing his distress was overwhelming; they desired him to think nothing of it; if the master, they told him, should wreak his resentment on *him*, "be the holy farmer, they would *pay*¹ the *masther*." Thady's claim was now undisputed; with only the injury of a black eye, and a lip swelled to the size of a sausage, he walked home in triumph, the poor scholar accompanying him.

The master, who feared that this open contempt of his authority, running up, as it did, into a very unpleasant species of retaliation, was something like a signal for him to leave the parish, felt rather more of the penitent the next morning than did any of his pupils. He was by no means displeased, therefore, to see them drop in about the usual hour. They came, however, not one by one, but in compact groups, each officered by two or three of the larger boys; for they feared that had they entered singly he might have punished them singly, until his vengeance should be satisfied. It was by bitter and obstinate struggles that they succeeded in repressing their mirth when he appeared at his desk with one of his eyes literally closed, and his nose considerably improved in size and richness of colour. When they were all assembled, he hemmed several times, and in a woe-begone tone of voice, split—by a feeble attempt at maintaining authority and suppressing his terrors—into two parts that jarred most ludicrously, he briefly addressed them as follows:—

"Gintlemen classics,—I have been now twenty-six years engaged in the propagation of Latin and Greek litherature, in conjunction wid Mathematics, but never until yesterday has my influence been spurned; never until yesterday have sacrilegious hands been laid upon my person; never until yesterday have I been kicked—insidiously, ungallantly, and treacherously kicked—by my own subjects. No, gintlemen—

¹ Punish.

and whether I ought to bestow that respectable epithet upon you after yesterday's proceedings is a matter which admits of dispute—never before has the lid of my eye been laid drooping, and that in such a manner that I must be blind to the conduct of half my pupils, whether I will or not. You have complained, it appears, of my want of impartiality; but God knows you have compelled me to be partial for a week to come. Neither blame me if I may appear to look upon you with scorn for the next fortnight, for I am compelled to turn up my nose at you much against my own inclination. You need never want an illustration of the *naso adunco* of Horace again—I'm a living example of it. That, and the doctrine of projectile forces, have been exemplified in a manner that will prevent me from ever relishing these subjects in future. No king can consider himself properly such until after he has received the oil of consecration; but you, it appears, think differently. You have unkinged me first, and anointed me afterwards; but, I say, no potentate would relish such unction. It smells confoundedly of republicanism. Maybe this is what *you* understand by the Republic of Letters; but if it be, I would advise you to change your principles. You treated my ribs as if they were the ribs of a common man; my shins you took liberties wid even to excoriation; my head you made a target of for your hardest turf; and my nose you dishonoured to my face. Was this generous? was it discreet? was it subordinate? and, above all, was it *classical*? However, I will show you what greatness of mind is; I will convince you that it is more noble and god-like to forgive an injury, or rather five dozen injuries, than to avenge one, when—hem!—yes, I say, when I—I—*might* so easily avenge it. I now present you wid an amnesty. Return to your allegiance, but never, while in this siminary, under my tuition, attmpt to take the execution of the laws into your own hands. Homerians, come up!”

This address, into which he purposely threw a dash of banter and mock gravity, delivered with the accompaniments of his swelled nose and drooping eye, pacified his audience more readily than a serious one would have done. It was received without any reply or symptom of disrespect, unless the occasional squeak of a suppressed laugh, or the visible shaking of many sides with inward convulsions, might be termed such.

In the course of the day, it is true, their powers of maintaining gravity were put to a severe test, particularly when, while hearing a class, he began to adjust his drooping eyelid, or coax back his nose into its natural position. On these

occasions a sudden pause might be noticed in the business of the class ; the boy's voice who happened to read at the time would fail him ; and on resuming his sentence by command of the master, its tone was tremulous, and scarcely adequate to the task of repeating the words without his bursting into laughter. The master observed all this clearly enough, but his mind was already made up to take no further notice of what had happened.

All this, however, conduced to render the situation of the poor scholar much more easy, or rather less penal, than it would otherwise have been. Still the innocent lad was on all possible occasions a butt for this miscreant. To miss a word was a pretext for giving him a cruel blow. To arrive two or three minutes later than the appointed hour was certain on his part to be attended with immediate punishment. Jemmy bore it all with silent heroism. He shed no tear—he uttered no remonstrance ; but under the anguish of pain so barbarously inflicted, he occasionally looked round upon his schoolfellows with an expression of silent entreaty that was seldom lost upon them. Cruel to him the master often was, but to inhuman barbarity the large scholars never permitted him to descend. Whenever any of the wealthier farmers' sons had neglected their lessons, or deserved chastisement, the mercenary creature substituted a joke for the birch ; but as soon as the son of a poor man, or, which was better still, the poor scholar, came before him, he transferred to his or their shoulders that punishment which the wickedness or idleness of respectable boys deserved. For this outrageous injustice the hard-hearted old villain had some plausible excuse ready, so that it was in many cases difficult for Jemmy's generous companions to interfere in his behalf, or parry the sophistry of such a petty tyrant.

In this miserable way did he pass over the tedious period of a year, going about every night in rotation with the scholars, and severely beaten on all possible occasions by the master. His conduct and manners won him the love and esteem of all except his tyrant instructor. His assiduity was remarkable, and his progress in the elements of English and classical literature surprisingly rapid. This added considerably to his character, and procured him additional respect. It was not long until he made himself useful and obliging to all the boys beneath his standing in the school. These services he rendered with an air of such kindness, and a grace so naturally winning, that the attachment of his schoolfellows increased towards him from day to day. Thady was his patron on all occasions ; neither did

the curate neglect him. The latter was his banker, for the boy had very properly committed his purse to his keeping. At the expiration of every quarter the schoolmaster received the amount of his bill, which he never failed to send in when due.

Jemmy had not, during his first year's residence in the south, forgotten to request the kind curate's interference with the landlord on behalf of his father. To be the instrument of restoring his family to their former comfortable holding under Colonel B—— would have afforded him, without excepting the certainty of his own eventual success, the highest gratification. Of this, however, there was no hope, and nothing remained for him but assiduity in his studies, and patience under the merciless scourge of his teacher. In addition to an engaging person and agreeable manners, nature had gifted him with a high order of intellect and great powers of acquiring knowledge. The latter he applied to the business before him with indefatigable industry. The school at which he settled was considered the first in Munster; and the master, notwithstanding his known severity, stood high, and justly so, in the opinion of the people, as an excellent classical and mathematical scholar. Jemmy applied himself to the study of both, and at the expiration of his second year had made such progress that he stood without a rival in the school.

It is usual, as we have said, for the poor scholar to go night after night in rotation with his schoolfellows; he is particularly welcome in the houses of those farmers whose children are not so far advanced as himself. It is expected that he should instruct them in the evenings, and enable them to prepare their lessons for the following day—a task which he always performs with pleasure, because in teaching them he is confirming his own mind in the knowledge which he has previously acquired. Towards the end of the second year, however, he ceased to circulate in this manner. Two or three of the most independent parishioners, whose sons were only commencing their studies, agreed to keep him week about—an arrangement highly convenient to him, as by that means he was not so frequently dragged, as he had been, to the remotest parts of the parish. Being an expert penman, he acted also as secretary of grievances to the poor, who frequently employed him to draw up petitions to obdurate landlords, or to their more obdurate agents, and letters to soldiers in all parts of the world from their anxious and affectionate relations. All these little services he performed kindly and promptly; many a blessing

was fervently invoked upon his head ; the "good word" and "the prayer" were all they could afford, as they said, "to the *bouchal dhas oge*¹ that tuck the world an him for sake o' the larnin', and that hasn't the kindliness o' the mother's breath an' the mother's hand near him, the crathur."

About the middle of the third year he was once more thrown upon the general hospitality of the people. The three farmers with whom he had lived for the preceding six months emigrated to America, as did many others of that class which, in this country, most nearly approximates to the substantial yeomanry of England. The little purse, too, which he had placed in the hands of the kind priest was exhausted ; a season of famine, sickness, and general distress had set in ; and the master, on understanding that he was without money, became diabolically savage. In short, the boy's difficulties increased to a perplexing degree. Even Thady and his grown companions, who usually interposed in his behalf when the master became excessive in correcting him, had left the school, and now the prospect before him was dark and cheerless indeed. For a few months longer, however, he struggled on, meeting every difficulty with meek endurance. Since his very boyhood he had revered the sanctions of religion, and was actuated by a strong devotional spirit. He trusted in God, and worshipped him night and morning with a sincere heart.

At this crisis he was certainly an object of pity ; his clothes, which for some time before were reduced to tatters, he had replaced by a cast-off coat and small-clothes, a present from his friend the curate, who never abandoned him. This worthy young man could not afford him money, for as he had but fifty pounds a year with which to clothe, subsist himself, keep a horse, and pay rent, it was hardly to be expected that his benevolence could be extensive. In addition to this, famine and contagious disease raged with formidable violence in the parish ; so that the claims upon his bounty of hundreds who lay huddled together in cold cabins, in out-houses, and even behind ditches, were incessant as well as heartrending. The number of interments that took place daily in the parish was awful ; nothing could be seen but funerals attended by groups of ragged and emaciated creatures, from whose hollow eyes gleamed forth the wolfish fire of famine. The wretched mendicants were countless, and the number of coffins that lay on the public roads—where, attended by the nearest relatives of

¹ The pretty *young* boy. *Boy*, in Ireland, does not always imply youth.

the deceased, they had been placed for the purpose of procuring charity—were greater than ever had been remembered by the oldest inhabitant.

Such was the state of the parish when our poor scholar complained one day in school of severe illness. The early symptoms of the prevailing epidemic were well known, and, on examining more closely into his situation, it was clear that, according to the phraseology of the people, he had "got the faver on his back"—had caught "a heavy load of the faver." The Irish are particularly apprehensive of contagious maladies. The moment it had been discovered that Jemmy was infected, his schoolfellows avoided him with a feeling of terror scarcely credible, and the inhuman master was delighted at any circumstance, however calamitous, that might afford him a pretext for driving the friendless youth out of the school.

"Take," said he, "everything belongin' to you out of my establishment; you were always a plague to me, but now more than ever. Be quick, sarra, and nidificate for yourself somewhere else. Do you want to thranslate my siminary into an hospital, and myself into Lazarus as president? Go off, you wild goose, and conjugate *ægrotō* wherever you find a convenient spot to do it in."

The poor boy silently and with difficulty arose, collected his books, and, slinging on his satchel, looked to his schoolfellows, as if he had said, "Which of you will afford me a place where to lay my aching head?" All, however, kept aloof from him; he had caught the contagion, and the contagion, they knew, had swept the people away in vast numbers.

At length he spoke. "Is there any boy among you," he inquired, "who will bring me home? You know I am a stranger, an' far from my own; God help me!"

This was followed by a profound silence. Not one of those who had so often befriended him, or who would on any other occasion share their bed and their last morsel with him, would even touch his person, much less allow him, when thus plague-stricken, to take shelter under their roof. Such are the effects of selfishness when it is opposed only by the force of those natural qualities that are not elevated into a sense of duty by clear and profound views of Christian truth. It is one thing to perform a kind action from constitutional impulse, and another to perform it as a fixed duty, perhaps contrary to that impulse.

Jemmy, on finding himself avoided like a Hebrew leper of old, silently left the school, and walked on without knowing whither he should ultimately direct his steps. He thought of his

friend the priest, but the distance between him and his place of abode was greater, he felt, than his illness would permit him to travel. He walked on, therefore, in such a state of misery and dereliction as can scarcely be conceived, much less described. His head ached excessively, an intense pain shot like death-pangs through his lower back and loins, his face was flushed and his head giddy. In this state he proceeded, without money or friends, without a house to shelter him, a bed on which to lie, far from his own relations, and with the prospect of death, under circumstances peculiarly dreadful, before him! He tottered on, however, the earth, as he imagined, reeling under him; the heavens, he thought, streaming with fire, and the earth indistinct and discoloured. Home, the paradise of the absent—home, the heaven of the affections—with all its tenderness and blessed sympathies, rushed upon his heart. His father's deep but quiet kindness, his mother's sedulous love; his brothers—all that they had been to him—these, with their thousand heart-stirring associations, started into life before him again and again. But he was now ill, and the mother—ah! the enduring sense of that mother's love placed her brightest and strongest and tenderest in the far and distant group which his imagination bodied forth.

"Mother!" he exclaimed, "oh, mother, why—why did I ever lave you? Mother! the son you loved is dyin' without a kind word—lonely and neglected in a strange land! Oh, my *own* mother! why did I ever lave you?"

The conflict between his illness and his affections overcame him; he staggered—he grasped as if for assistance at the vacant air—he fell, and lay for some time in a state of insensibility.

The season was then that of midsummer, and early meadows were falling before the scythe. As the boy sank to the earth a few labourers were eating their scanty dinner of bread and milk so near him that only a dry low ditch ran between him and them. They had heard his words indistinctly, and one of them was putting the milk bottle to his lips, when, attracted by the voice, he looked in the direction of the speaker, and saw him fall. They immediately recognised "the poor scholar," and in a moment were attempting to recover him.

"Why thin, my poor fellow, what's a *shaughran* wid you?"

Jemmy started for a moment, looked about him, and asked, "Where am I?"

"Faitha, thin, you're in Rory Connor's field, widin a few

perches of the high road. But what ails you, poor boy?—is it sick you are?”

“It is,” he replied; “I have got the faver. I had to lave school; none o’ them would take me home, an’ I doubt I must die in a Christian counthry undher the open canopy of heaven. Oh, for God’s sake, don’t lave me! Bring me to some hospital, or into the next town, where people may know that I’m sick, an’ maybe some kind Christian will relieve me!”

The moment he mentioned “Fever” the men involuntarily drew back, after having laid him reclining against the green ditch.

“Thin, thundher an’ turf, what’s to be done?” exclaimed one of them, thrusting his spread fingers into his hair. “Is the poor boy to die widout help among Christyeens like uz?”

“But hasn’t he the sickness?” exclaimed another, “an’ in that case, Pether, what’s to be done?”

“Why, you gommoch, isn’t that what I’m wantin’ to know? You wor ever an’ always a dam’ ass, Paddy, except before you wor born, an’ thin you wor like Major M’Curragh, worse nor nothin’. Why the sarra do you be spakin’ about the sickness, the Lord protect us, whin you know I’m so timersome of it?”

“But considher,” said another, edging off from Jemmy, however, “that he’s a poor scholar, an’ that there’s a great blessin’ to him that assists the likes of him.”

“Ay, is there that, sure enough, Dan; but you see—blur-an-age, what’s to be done? He can’t die this-a-way, wid nobody wid him but himself.”

“Let us help him!” exclaimed another, “for *God’s* sake, an’ we won’t be apt to take it thin.”

“Ay, but how can we help him, Frank? Oh, bedad, it ud be a murderin’ shame, all out, to let the crathur die by himself, widout company, so it would.”

“No one will take him in for fraid o’ the sickness. Why, I’ll tell you what we’ll do. Let us skhame the remainder o’ this day off o’ the Major, an’ build a shed for him on the road-side here, jist aginst the ditch. It’s as dhry as powdher. Thin we can go through the neighbours, an’ get them to sit near him time about, an’ to bring him little dhreeniens o’ nourishment.”

“Divil a purtier! Come, thin, let us get a lot o’ the neighbours, and set about it, poor bouchal. Who knows but it may bring down a blessin’ upon us, aither in this world or the next?”

“Amin! I pray Gorra! an’ so it will, sure; doesn’t the Catechiz say it? ‘There is but one Church,’ says the Catechiz,

'one Faith, an' one Baptism.' Bedad, there's a power o' fine larnin' in the same Catechiz, so there is, an' mighty improvin'."

An Irishman never works for wages with half the zeal which he displays when working *con amore*. Ere many hours had passed, a number of the neighbours had assembled, and Jemmy found himself on a bunch of clean straw in a little shed erected for him at the edge of the road.

Perhaps it would be impossible to conceive a more gloomy state of misery than that in which young M'Evoy found himself. Stretched on the side of the public road, in a shed formed of a few loose sticks covered over with "scraws"—that is, the sward of the earth pared into thin stripes—removed about fifty perches from any human habitation—his body racked with a furious and oppressive fever—his mind conscious of all the horrors by which he was surrounded—without the comforts even of a bed or bed-clothes—and, what was worst of all, those from whom he might expect kindness afraid to approach him! Lying helpless, under these circumstances, it ought not to be wondered at if he wished that death might at once close his extraordinary sufferings, and terminate those struggles which filial piety had prompted him to encounter.

This certainly is a dark picture, but our humble hero knew that even there the power and goodness of God could support him. The boy trusted in God; and when removed into his little shed, and stretched upon his clean straw, he felt that his situation was, in good sooth, comfortable, when contrasted with what it might have been if left to perish behind a ditch, exposed to the scorching heat of the sun by day, and the dews of heaven by night. He felt the hand of God even in this, and placed himself, with a short but fervent prayer, under his fatherly protection.

Irishmen, however, are not just that description of persons who can pursue their usual avocations and see a fellow-creature die without such attentions as they can afford him; not precisely so bad as that, gentle reader! Jemmy had not been two hours on his straw when a second shed, much larger than his own, was raised within a dozen yards of it. In this a fire was lit; a small pot was then procured, milk was sent in, and such other little comforts brought together as they supposed necessary for the sick boy. Having accomplished these matters, a kind of guard was set to watch and nurse-tend him; a pitchfork was got, on the prongs of which they intended to reach him bread across the ditch; and a long-shafted shovel was borrowed, on which to furnish him drink

with safety to themselves. That inextinguishable vein of humour, which in Ireland mingles even with death and calamity, was also visible here. The ragged, half-starved creatures laughed heartily at the oddity of their own inventions, and enjoyed the ingenuity with which they made shift to meet the exigencies of the occasion, without in the slightest degree having their sympathy and concern for the afflicted youth lessened.

When their arrangements were completed, one of them (he of the scythe) made a little whey, which, in lieu of a spoon, he stirred with the end of his tobacco knife; he then extended it across the ditch upon the shovel, after having put it in a tin porringer.

"Do you want a taste o' whey, avourneen?"

"Oh, I do," replied Jemmy; "give me a drink, for God's sake."

"There it is, a bouchal, on the shovel. Musha if myself rightly knows what side you're lyin' an, or I'd put it as near your lips as I could. Come, man, be stout, don't be cast down, at all at all; sure, bud-an-age, we're shovellin' the whey to you, anyhow."

"I have it," replied the boy—"oh, I have it. May God never forget this to you, whoever you are!"

"Faith, if you want to know who I am, I'm Pether Connor the mower, that never seen to-morrow. Be gorra, poor boy, you mustn't let your spirits down, at all at all. Sure the neighbours is all bint to watch an' take care of you. May I take away the shovel?—an' they've built a brave snug shed here beside yours, where they'll stay wid you time about until you get well. We'll feed you wid whey enough, bekase we've made up our minds to stale lots o' sweet milk for you. Ned Branagan an' I will milk Rody Hartigan's cows to-night, wid the help o' God. Divil a bit sin in it, so there isn't, an' if there is, too, be my sowl there's no harm in it, anyway—for he's but a nager himself, the same Rody. So, acushla, keep a light heart, for, be gorra, you're sure o' the thin pair o' trowsers, anyhow. Don't think you're deserted—for you're not. It's all in regard o' bein' afeard o' this faver, or it's not this way you'd be; but, as I said a while ago, when you want anything, spake, for you'll still find two or three of us beside you here, night an' day. Now won't you promise to keep your mind asy, when you know that we're beside you?"

"God bless you," replied Jemmy, "you've taken a weight off my heart. I thought I'd die wid nobody near me at all."

"Oh, the sorra fear of it. Keep your heart up. We'll stale lots o' milk for you. Bad scan to the baste in the parish but we'll milk, sooner nor you'd want the whey, you crathur, you."

The boy felt relieved, but his malady increased; and were it not that the confidence of being thus watched and attended to supported him, it is more than probable he would have sunk under it.

When the hour of closing the day's labour arrived, Major — came down to inspect the progress which his mowers had made, and the goodness of the crop upon his meadows. No sooner was he perceived at a distance than the scythes were instantly resumed, and the mowers pursued their employment with an appearance of zeal and honesty that could not be suspected.

On arriving at the meadows, however, he was evidently startled at the miserable day's work they had performed.

"Why, Connor," said he, addressing the nurse-tender, "how is this? I protest you have not performed half a day's labour! This is miserable and shameful."

"Bedad, major, it's thrue for your honour, sure enough. It's a poor day's work, the never a doubt of it. But be all the books that never was opened or shut, busier men nor we were since mornin' couldn't be had for love or money. You see, major, these meadows—bad luck to them!—God pardon me for cursin' the harmless crathurs, for sure, 'tisin't their fau't, sir; but you see, major, I'll insinse you into it. Now look here, your honour. Did you ever see deeper meadow nor that same since you war foal—hem!—since you war born, your honour? Maybe your honour, major, ud just take the scythe an' s thrive to cut a swaythe?"

"Nonsense, Connor; don't you know I cannot."

"Thin, be gorra, sir, I wisht you could thry it. I'd kiss the book, we did more labour, an' worked harder this day, nor any day for the last fortnight. If it was light grass, sir—see here, major, here's a light bit—now, look at how the scythe runs through it! Thin look at here agin—jist observe this, major—why, murdher alive, don't you see how slow she goes through *that* where the grass is *heavy*? Bedad, major, you'll be made up this season wid your hay, anyhow. Divil carry the finer meadow ever I put scythe in nor the same meadow, God bless it!"

"Yes, I see it, Connor. I agree with you as to its goodness. But the reason of that is, Connor, that I always direct my steward myself in laying it down for grass. Yes, you're right,

Connor ; if the meadow were light, you could certainly mow comparatively a greater space in a day."

"Be the livin' farmer, God pardon me for swearin', it's a pleasure to have dalin's wid a gentleman like you, that knows things as cute as if you war a mower yourself, your honour. Bedad, I'll go bail, sir, it wouldn't be hard to tache you that same."

"Why, to tell you the truth, Connor, you have hit me off pretty well. I'm beginning to get a taste for agriculture."

"But," said Connor, scratching his head, "won't your honour allow us the price of a glass, or a pint o' porther, for our hard day's work? Bad cess to me, sir, but this meadow 'll play the puck wid us afore we get it finished. Atween ourselves, sir—if it wouldn't be takin' freedoms—if you'd look to *your own* farmin' *yourself*. The steward, sir, is a dacent kind of man, but, sowl, he couldn't hould a candle to your honour in seein' to the best way of doin' a thing, sir. Won't you allow us glasses apiece, your honour? Faix, we're kilt entirely, so we are."

"Here is half-a-crown among you, Connor ; but don't get drunk."

"Dhrunk ! Musha, long may you reign, sir ! Be the scythe in my hand, I'd rather—och, faix, you're one o' the ould sort, sir—the raal Irish gentleman, your honour. An' sure your name's far an' near for that, anyhow."

Connor's face would have done the heart of Brooke or Cruikshank good, had either of them seen it charged with humour so rich as that which beamed from it when the Major left them to enjoy their own comments upon what had happened.

"Oh, be the livin' farmer," said Connor, "are we alive at all afther *doin'* the major ! Oh, thin, the curse o' the crows upon you, major darlin', but you are a *Manus* ! The damn' rip o' the world, that wouldn't give the breath he breathes to the poor for God's sake, an' he'll *thrown* a man half-a-crown that'll blarney him for farmin', an' him doesn't know the differ atween a Cork-red an' a Yallow-leg !"

"Faith, he's the boy that knows how to make a Judy of himself, anyway, Pether," exclaimed another. "The divil a hapurth asier nor to give these quality the bag to hould, so there isn't—an' they think themselves so cute, too !"

"Augh !" said a third, "couldn't a man find the soft side o' them as asy as make out the way to his own nose widout bein' led to it? Divil a sin it is to *do them*, anyway. Sure he thinks we wor tooth an' nail at the meadow all day ; an' methought

I'd never recover it, to see Pether here—the rise he tuck out of him! Ha, ha, ha—och, och—murdher, oh!”

“Faith,” exclaimed Connor, “’twas good, you see, to help the poor scholar; only for it we couldn’t get shkamin’ the half-crown out of him. I think we ought to give the crathur half of it, an’ him so sick—he’ll be wantin’ it worse nor ourselves.”

“Oh, be gorra, he’s fairly entitled to that. I vote him fifteen pince.”

“Surely!” they exclaimed unanimously—“tundher-an’-turf, wasn’t he the manes of gettin’ it for us?”

“Jimmy, a bouchal,” said Connor, across the ditch to M’Evoy, “are you sleepin’?”

“Sleepin’! Oh, no,” replied Jemmy; “I’d give the wide world for one wink of asy sleep.”

“Well, aroon, here’s fifteen pince for you, that we shkam—will I tell him how we got it?”

“No, don’t,” replied his neighbours; “the boy’s given to devotion, an’ maybe might scruple to take it.”

“Here’s fifteen pince, avourneen, on the shovel, that we’re giving you *for God’s sake*. If you *over*¹ this, won’t you offer up a prayer for us? Won’t you, avick?”

“I can never forget your kindness,” replied Jemmy. “I will always pray for you, an’ may God for ever bless you an’ yours.”

“Poor crathur! May the heavens above have prostration on him! Upon my sowl, it’s good to have his blessin’ an’ his prayer. Now don’t fret, Jimmy; we’re lavin’ you wid a lot o’ neighbours here. They’ll watch you time about, so that whin you want anything, call, avourneen, an’ there’ll still be some one here to answer. God bless you, an’ restore you, till we come wid the milk we’ll stale for you wid the help o’ God. Bad cess to me, but it ud be a mortual sin, so it would, to let the poor boy die at all, an’ him so far from home. For, as the Catechiz says, ‘There is but one Faith, one Church, and one Baptism!’ Well, the readin’ that’s in that Catechiz is mighty improvin’, glory be to God!”

It would be utterly impossible to detail the affliction which our poor scholar suffered in this wretched shed for the space of a fortnight, notwithstanding the efforts of those kind-hearted people to render his situation comfortable.

The little wigwam they had constructed near him was never, even for a moment, during his whole illness without two or three persons ready to attend him. In the evening their

¹ That is, to get over—to survive.

numbers increased ; a fire was always kept burning, over which a little pot for making whey or gruel was suspended. At night they amused each other with anecdotes and laughter, and occasionally with songs, when certain that their patient was not asleep. Their excursions to steal milk for him were performed with uncommon glee, and related among themselves with great humour. These thefts would have been unnecessary had not the famine which then prevailed through the province been so excessive. The crowds that swarmed about the houses of wealthy farmers, supplicating a morsel to keep body and soul together, resembled nothing which our English readers ever had an opportunity of seeing. Ragged, emaciated creatures tottered about with an expression of wildness and voracity in their gaunt features; fathers and mothers reeled under the burthen of their beloved children, the latter either sick or literally expiring for want of food; and the widow, in many instances, was compelled to lay down her head to die with the wail, the feeble wail, of her withered orphans mingling with her last moans ! In such a state of things it was difficult to procure a sufficient quantity of milk to allay the unnatural thirst even of one individual, when parched by the scorching heat of a fever. Notwithstanding this, his wants were for the most part anticipated, so far as their means would allow them; his shed was kept waterproof; and either shovel or pitchfork always ready to be extended to him by way of substitution for the right hand of fellowship.

When he called for anything, the usual observation was, "Husht ! the crathur's callin' ; I must take the shovel an' see what he wants."

There were times, it is true, when the mirth of the poor fellows was very low, for hunger was generally among themselves ; there were times when their own little shed presented a touching and melancholy spectacle—perhaps we ought also to add, a noble one ; for to contemplate a number of men, considered rude and semi-barbarous, devoting themselves, in the midst of privations the most cutting and oppressive, to the care and preservation of a strange lad, merely because they knew him to be without friends and protection, is to witness a display of virtue truly magnanimous. The food on which some of the persons were occasionally compelled to live was blood boiled up with a little oatmeal ; for when a season of famine occurs in Ireland, the people usually bleed the cows and bullocks to preserve themselves from actual starvation. It is truly a sight of appalling misery to behold feeble women gliding

across the country, carrying their cans and pitchers, actually trampling upon fertility and fatness, and collected in the corner of some grazier's farm, waiting, gaunt and ravenous as Ghouls, for their portion of blood. During these melancholy periods of want, everything in the shape of an esculent disappears. The miserable creatures will pick up chickenweed, nettles, sorrel, bugloss, preshagh, and sea-weed, which they will boil and eat with the voracity of persons writhing under the united agonies of hunger and death! Yet, singular to say, the very country thus groaning under such a terrible sweep of famine is actually pouring from all her ports a profusion of food, day after day; flinging it from her fertile bosom with the wanton excess of a prodigal oppressed by abundance.

Despite, however, of all that the poor scholar's nurse-guard suffered, he was attended with a fidelity of care and sympathy which no calamity could shake. Nor was this care fruitless; after the fever had passed through its usual stages, he began to recover. In fact, it has been observed, very truly, that scarcely any person has been known to die under circumstances similar to those of the poor scholar. These sheds, the erection of which is not unfrequent in case of fever, have the advantage of pure free air, by which the patient is cooled and refreshed. Be the cause of it what it may, the fact has been established, and we feel satisfaction in being able to adduce our humble hero as an additional proof of the many recoveries which take place in situations apparently so unfavourable to human life. But how is it possible to detail what M'Evoy suffered during this fortnight of intense agony? Not those who can command the luxuries of life—not those who can reach its comforts—nor those who can supply themselves with its bare necessities—neither the cottier who struggles to support his wife and helpless children—the mendicant who begs from door to door—nor even the felon in his cell—can imagine what he felt in the solitary misery of his feverish bed. Hard is the heart that cannot *feel* his sorrows, when, stretched beside the common way, without a human face to look on, he called upon the mother whose brain, had she known his situation, would have been riven—whose affectionate heart would have been broken by the knowledge of his affliction. It was a situation which afterwards appeared to him dark and terrible. The pencil of the painter could not depict it, nor the pen of the poet describe it, except like a dim vision, which neither the heart nor the imagination are able to give to the world as a tale steeped in the sympathies excited by reality.

His whole heart and soul, as he afterwards acknowledged, were during his trying illness *at home*. The voices of his parents, of his sisters, and of his brothers were always in his ears; their countenances surrounded his cold and lonely shed; their hands touched him; their eyes looked upon him in sorrow, and their tears bedewed him. Even there, the light of his mother's love, though she herself was distant, shone upon his sorrowful couch; and he has declared that in no past moment of affection did his soul ever burn with a sense of its presence so strongly as it did in the heart-dreams of his severest illness. But God is love, "and tempereth the wind to the shorn lamb."

Much of all his sufferings would have been alleviated were it not that his two best friends in the parish, Thady and the curate, had been both prostrated by the fever at the same time with himself. There was consequently no person of respectability in the neighbourhood cognisant of his situation. He was left to the humbler class of the peasantry, and honourably did they, with all their errors and ignorances, discharge those duties which greater wealth and greater knowledge would probably have left unperformed.

On the morning of the last day he ever intended to spend in the shed, at eleven o'clock, he heard the sounds of horses' feet passing along the road. The circumstance was one quite familiar to him; but these horsemen, whoever they might be, stopped, and immediately after two respectable-looking men, dressed in black, approached him. His forlorn state and frightfully-wasted appearance startled them, and the younger of the two asked, in a tone of voice which went directly to his heart, how it was they found him in a situation so desolate.

The kind interest implied by the words, and probably a sense of his utterly destitute state, affected him strongly, and he burst into tears. The strangers looked at each other, then at him; and if looks could express sympathy, theirs expressed it.

"My good boy," said the first, "how is it that we find you in a situation so deplorable and wretched as this? Who are you, or why is it that you have not a friendly roof to shelter you?"

"I'm a poor scholar," replied Jemmy, "the son of honest but reduced parents. I came to this part of the country with the intention of preparing myself for Maynooth, and, if it might please God, with the hope of being able to raise them out of their distress."

The strangers looked more earnestly at the boy; sickness had touched his fine intellectual features into a purity of

expression almost ethereal. His fair skin appeared nearly transparent, and the light of truth and candour lit up his countenance with a lustre which affliction could not dim.

The other stranger approached him more nearly, stooped for a moment, and felt his pulse.

"How long have you been in this country?" he inquired.

"Nearly three years."

"You have been ill of the fever which is so prevalent; but how did you come to be left to the chance of perishing upon the highway?"

"Why, sir, the people were afraid to let me into their houses in consequence of the fever. I got ill in school, sir, but no boy would venture to bring me home, an' the master turned me out, to die, I believe. May God forgive him!"

"Who was your master, my child?"

"The great Mr. —, sir. If Mr. O'Brien, the curate of the parish, hadn't been ill himself at the same time, or if Mr. O'Rorke's son, Thady, hadn't been laid on his back too, sir, I wouldn't suffer what I did."

"Has the curate been kind to you?"

"Sir, only for him and the big boys I couldn't stay in the school, on account of the master's cruelty, particularly since my money was out."

"You are better now—are you not?" said the other gentleman.

"Thank God, sir!—oh, thanks be to the Almighty, I am! I expect to be able to lave this place to-day or to-morrow."

"And where do you intend to go when you recover?"

The boy himself had not thought of this, and the question came on him so unexpectedly that he could only reply—

"Indeed, sir, I don't know."

"Had you," inquired the second stranger, "testimonials from your parish priest?"

"I had, sir; they are in the hands of Mr. O'Brien. I also had a character from my father's landlord."

"But how," asked the other, "have you existed here during your illness? Have you been long sick?"

"Indeed, I can't tell you, sir, for I don't know how the time passed at all; but I know, sir, that there were always two or three people attendin' me. They sent me whatever they thought I wanted upon a shovel or a pitchfork, across the ditch, because they were afraid to come near me."

During the early part of the dialogue two or three old hats, or caubeens, might have been seen moving steadily over from

the wigwam to the ditch which ran beside the shed occupied by M'Evoy. Here they remained stationary, for those who wore them were now within hearing of the conversation, and ready to give their convalescent patient a good word, should it be necessary.

"How were you supplied with drink and medicine?" asked the younger stranger.

"As I've just told you, sir," replied Jemmy, "the neighbours here let me want for nothing that they had. They kept me in more whey than I could use; and they got me medicine too, some way or other. But indeed, sir, during a great part of the time I was ill, I can't say how they attended me; I wasn't sensible, sir, of what was goin' on about me."

One of those who lay behind the ditch now arose, and, after a few hems and scratchings of the head, ventured to join in the conversation.

"Pray have you, my man," said the elder of the two, "been acquainted with the circumstances of this boy's illness?"

"Is it the poor scholar, my lord?¹ Oh, thin, bedad, it's myself that has that. The poor crathur was in a terrible way all out, so he was. He caught the faver in the school beyant one day, an' was turned out by the nager o' the world that he was larnin' from."

"Are you one of the persons who attended him?"

"Och, och, the crathur! what could unsignified people like us do for him, barrin' a thrifle? Anyhow, my lord, it's the meracle o' the world that he was ever able to *over* it at all. Why, sir, good luck to the one of him but suffered as much, wid the help o' God, as ud overcome fifty men!"

"How did you provide him with drink at such a distance from any human habitation?"

"Throth, hard enough we found it, sir, to do that same; but sure, whether or not, my lord, we couldn't be sich nagers as to let him die all out, for want o' somethin' to moisten his throat wid."

"I hope," inquired the other, "you had nothing to do in the milk-stealing which has produced such an outcry in this immediate neighbourhood?"

"Milk-stalin'! Oh, bedad, sir, there never was the likes known afore in the country. The Lord forgive them that did it! Be gorra, sir, the wickedness o' the people's mighty improvin', if one ud take warnin' by it, glory be to God!"

¹ The peasantry always address a Roman Catholic bishop as "my lord."

"Many of the farmers' cows have been milked at night, Connor—perfectly drained—even my own cows have not escaped; and we who have suffered are certainly determined, if possible, to ascertain those who have committed the theft. I, for my part, have gone even beyond my ability in relieving the wants of the poor during this period of sickness and famine; I therefore deserved this the less."

"By the powers, your honour, if any gentleman desarved to have his cows *unmilked*, it's yourself. But, as I said this minute, there's no end to the wickedness o' the people, so there's not, although the Catechiz is against them—for, says it, 'there is but one Faith, one Church, an' one Baptism.' Now, sir, isn't it quare that people, wid sich words in the book afore them, won't be guided by it? I suppose they thought it only a *white* sin, sir, to take the milk, the thieves o' the world."

"Maybe, your honour," said another, "that it was only to keep the life in some poor sick crathur, that wanted it more nor you nor the farmers, that they did it. There's some o' the same farmers desarve worse, for they're keepin' up the prices o' their male an' praties upon the poor, an' did so all along, that they might make money by our outhur distitution."

"That is no justification for theft," observed the graver of the two. "Does any one among you suspect those who committed it in this instance? It you do, I command you, as your bishop, to mention them."

"How, for instance," added the other, "were you able to supply this sick boy with whey during his illness?"

"Oh, thin, gintlemen," replied Connor, dexterously parrying the question, "but it's a mighty improvin' thing to see our own bishop—God spare his lordship to us!—an' the Protestant minister o' the parish joinin' together to relieve an' give good advice to the poor! Bedad, it's settin' a fine example, so it is, to the quality, if they'd take pattrn by it."

"Reply," said the bishop, rather sternly, "to the questions we have asked you."

"The quistions, your lordship? It's proud an' happy we'd be to do what you want; but the sarra man among us *can* do it, barrin' we'd say what we *ought not* to say. That's the truth, my lord; an' surely 'tisn't your gracious reverence that ud want us to go beyant it?"

"Certainly not," replied the bishop. "I warn you against both falsehood and fraud—two charges which might frequently be brought against you in your intercourse with the gentry of the country, whom you seldom scruple to deceive and mislead

by gliding into a character, when speaking to them, that is often the reverse of your real one ; whilst, at the same time, you are both honest and sincere to persons of your class. Put away this practice, for it is both sinful and discreditable."

"God bless your lordship ! an' many thanks to your gracious reverence for advisin' us ! Well we know that it's the blessed thing to folly your words."

"Bring over that naked, starved-looking man who is stirring the fire under that pot," said the rector ; "he looks like famine itself."

"Paddy Dunn, will you come over here to his honour, Paddy ? He's goin' to give you somethin'," said Connor, adding of his own accord the last clause of the message.

The tattered creature approached him with a gleam of expectation in his eyes that appeared like insanity.

"God bless your honour for your goodness !" exclaimed Paddy. "It's me that's in it, sir !—Paddy Dunn, sir, sure enough ; but indeed I'm the next thing to my own ghost, sir, now—God help me !"

"What, and for whom, are you cooking ?"

"Jist the smallest dhrop in life, sir, o' gruel, to keep the sowl in that lonely crathur, sir, the poor scholar."

"Pray how long is it since you have eaten anything yourself ?"

The tears burst from the eyes of the miserable creature as he replied—

"Before God in glory, your honour, an' in presence of his lordship here, I only got about what ud make betther nor half a male widin the last day, sir. 'Twas a weeshy grain o' male that I got from a friend ; an' as Ned Connor here tould me that this crathur had nothin' to make the gruel for him, why I shared it wid him, becase he couldn't even beg it, sir, if he wanted it, an' him not able to walk yit."

The worthy pastor's eyes glistened with a moisture that did him honour. Without a word of observation he slipped a crown into the hand of Dunn, who looked at it as if he had been paralysed.

"Oh, thin," said he fervently, "may every hair on your honour's head become a mould-candle to light you into glory ! The world's goodness is in your heart, sir ; an' may all the blessin's of heaven rain down upon you an' yours !"

The two gentlemen then gave assistance to the poor scholar, whom the bishop addressed in kind and encouraging language.

"Come to me, my good boy," he added, "and if, on further

inquiry, I find that your conduct has been such as I believe it to have been, you may rest assured, provided also you *continue* worthy of my good opinion, that I shall be a friend and a protector to you. Call on me when you get well, and I will speak to you at greater length."

"Well," observed Connor, when they were gone, "the divil's own hard puzzle the bishop had me in about staln' the milk. It wint agin the grain wid me to tell *him* the lie, so I had to invint a bit o' thruth to keep my conscience clear; for sure there was *not* a man among us that *could* tell him, barrin' we said what we *oughtn't* to say. Doesn't all the world know that a man oughtn't to condimn himself! That was *thruth*, anyway; but divil a scruple I'd have in *bammn'* the other—not but that he's one o' the best of his sort. Paddy Dunn, quit lookin' at that crown, but get the shovel an' give the boy his dhrink—he's wantin' it."

The agitation of spirits produced by Jemmy's cheering interview with the bishop was, for two or three days afterwards, somewhat prejudicial to his convalescence. In less than a week, however, he was comfortably settled with Mr. O'Rorke's family, whose kindness proved to him quite as warm as he had expected.

When he had remained with them a few days, he resolved to recommence his studies under his tyrant master. He certainly knew that his future attendance at the school would be penal to him, but he had always looked forward to the accomplishment of his hopes as a task of difficulty and distress. The severity to be expected from the master could not, he thought, be greater than that which he had already suffered; he therefore decided, if possible, to complete his education under him.

The school, when Jemmy appeared in it, had been for more than an hour assembled, but the thinness of the attendance not only proved the woful prevalence of sickness and distress in the parish, but sharpened the pedagogue's vinegar aspect into an expression of countenance singularly peevish and gloomy. When the lad entered a murmur of pleasure and welcome ran through the scholars, and joy beamed forth from every countenance but that of his teacher. When the latter noticed this, his irritability rose above restraint, and he exclaimed—

"Silence! and apply to business, or I shall cause some of you to denude immediately. No school ever can prosper in which that *hirudo*, called a poor scholar, is permitted toleration. I thought, sarra, I told you to nidificate, and hatch your wild project undher some other wing than mine."

"I only entrate you," replied our poor hero, "to suffer me to join the class I left while I was sick for about another year. I'll be very quiet and humble, and, as far as I can, will do everything you wish me."

"Ah! you are a crawling reptile," replied the savage, "and, in my opinion, nothing but a chate and impostor. I think you have imposed yourself on Mr. O'Brien for what you are not—that is, the son of an honest man. I have no doubt but many of your nearest relations died after having seen their own funerals. Your mother, you runagate, wasn't your father's wife, I'll be bail."

The spirit of the boy could bear this no longer; his eyes flashed, and his sinews stood out in the energy of deep indignation.

"It is false," he exclaimed; "it is as false as your own cruel and cowardly heart, you wicked and unprincipled tyrant! In everything you have said of my father, mother, and friends, and of myself too, you are a liar, from the hat on your head to the dirt under your feet—a liar, a coward, and a villain!"

The fury of the miscreant was ungovernable. He ran at the still feeble lad, and, by a stroke of his fist, dashed him senseless to the earth. There were now no large boys in the school to curb his resentment, he therefore kicked him in the back when he fell. Many voices exclaimed in alarm, "Oh! mather, sir, don't kill him! Oh! sir, dear, don't kill him! Don't kill poor Jimmy, sir, an' him still sick!"

"Kill him!" replied the master—"kill him, indeed! Faith, he'd be no common man who could kill him; he has as many lives in him as a cat! Sure he can live behind a ditch, wid the faver on his back, widout dying; and he would live if he was stuck on the spire of a steeple."

In the meantime the boy gave no symptoms of returning life, and the master, after desiring a few of the scholars to bring him out to the air, became pale as death with apprehension. He immediately withdrew to his private apartment, which joined the schoolroom, and sent out his wife to assist in restoring him to animation. With some difficulty this was accomplished. The unhappy boy at once remembered what had just occurred, and the bitter tears gushed from his eyes, as he knelt down and exclaimed, "Merciful Father of heaven and earth, have pity on me! You see my heart, great God! and what I did, I did for the best."

"Avourneen," said the woman, "he's passionate, an' never mind him. Come in an' beg his pardon for callin' him a liar,

an' I'll become spokesman for you myself. Come, acushla, an' I'll get lave for you to stay in the school still."

"Oh, I'm hurted!" said the poor youth—"I'm hurted inwardly—somewhere about the back and about my ribs!" The pain he felt brought the tears down his pale cheeks. "I wish I was at home!" said he. "I'll give up all and go home!" The lonely boy then laid his head upon his hands, as he sat on the ground, and indulged in a long burst of sorrow.

"Well," said a manly-looking little fellow, whilst the tears stood in his eyes, "I'll tell my father this, anyhow. I know he won't let me come to this school any more. Here, Jimmy, is a piece of my bread; maybe it will do you good."

"I couldn't taste it, Frank dear," said Jemmy; "God bless you! but I couldn't taste it."

"Do," said Frank; "maybe it will bate back the pain."

"Don't ask me, Frank dear," said Jemmy; "I couldn't ate it; I'm hurted inwardly."

"Bad luck to me!" exclaimed the indignant boy, "if ever my ten toes will darken this school door agin. By the livin' farmer, if they ax me at home to do it, I'll run away to my uncle's, so I will. Wait, Jimmy, I'll be big yet; an' be the blessed gospel that's about my neck, I'll give the same masther a shirtful of sore bones, the holy an' blessed minute I'm able to do it."

Many of the other boys declared that they would acquaint their friends with the master's cruelty to the poor scholar; but Jemmy requested them not to do so, and said that he was determined to return home the moment he should be able to travel.

The affrighted woman could not prevail upon him to seek a reconciliation with her husband, although the expressions of the other scholars induced her to press him to it, even to entreaty. Jemmy arose, and with considerable difficulty reached the curate's house, found him at home, and, with tears in his eyes related to him the atrocious conduct of the master.

"Very well," said this excellent man, "I am glad that I can venture to ride as far as Colonel B——'s to-morrow. You must accompany me; for decidedly such brutality cannot be permitted to go unpunished."

Jemmy knew that the curate was his friend; and although he would not himself have thought of summoning the master to answer for his barbarity, yet he acquiesced in the curate's opinion. He stopped that night in the house of the worthy man to whom Mr. O'Brien had recommended him on his first entering the

town. It appeared in the morning, however, that he was unable to walk; the blows which he had received were *then* felt by him to be more dangerous than had been supposed. Mr. O'Brien, on being informed of this, procured a jaunting car, on which they both sat, and, at an easy pace, reached the colonel's residence.

The curate was shown into an anteroom, and Jemmy sat in the hall; the colonel joined the former in a few minutes. He had been in England and on the Continent, accompanied by his family, for nearly the last three years, but had just returned in order to take possession of a large property in land and money, to which he succeeded at a very critical moment, for his own estates were heavily encumbered. He was now proprietor of an additional estate, the rent-roll of which was six thousand per annum, and also master of eighty-five thousand pounds in the funds.

Mr. O'Brien, after congratulating him upon his good fortune, introduced the case of our hero as one which, in his opinion, called for the colonel's interposition as a magistrate.

"I have applied to you, sir," he proceeded, "rather than to any other of the neighbouring gentlemen, because I think this friendless lad has a peculiar claim upon any good offices you could render him."

"A claim upon me! how is that, Mr. O'Brien?"

"The boy, sir, is not a native of this province. His father was formerly a tenant of yours—a man, as I have reason to believe, remarkable for good conduct and industry. It appears that his circumstances, so long as he was your tenant, were those of a comfortable independent farmer. If the story which his son relates be true—and I, for one, believe it—his family have been dealt with in a manner unusually cruel and iniquitous. Your present agent, colonel, who is known in his own neighbourhood by the nickname of *Yellow Sam*, thrust him out of his farm, when his wife was sick, for the purpose of putting into it a man who had married his illegitimate daughter. If this be found a correct account of the transaction, I have no hesitation in saying that you, Colonel B——, as a gentleman of honour and humanity, will investigate the conduct of your agent, and see justice done to an honest man who must have been oppressed in your name, and under colour of your authority."

"If my agent has dared to be unjust to a worthy tenant," said the colonel, "in order to provide for his bastard, by my sacred honour, he shall cease to be an agent of mine! I admit,

certainly, that from some circumstances which transpired a few years ago I had reason to suspect his integrity. That, to be sure, was only so far as he and I were concerned ; but, on the other hand, during one or two visits I made to the estate which he manages, I heard the tenants thank and praise him with much gratitude, and all that sort of thing. There was 'Thank your honour ;' 'Long may you reign over us, sir ;' and 'Oh, colonel, you've a mighty good man to your agent ;' and so forth. I do not think, Mr. O'Brien, that he has acted so harshly, or that he would dare to do it. Upon my honour, I heard those warm expressions of gratitude from the lips of the tenants themselves."

"If you knew the people in general, colonel, so well as I do," replied the curate, "you would admit that such expressions are often either cuttingly ironical or the result of fear. You will always find, sir, that the independent portion of the people have least of this forced dissimulation among them. A dishonest and inhuman agent has in his own hands the irresponsible power of harassing and oppressing the tenantry under him. The class most hateful to the people are those low wretches who spring up from nothing into wealth, accumulated by dishonesty and rapacity. They are proud, overbearing, and jealous, even to vindictiveness, of the least want of respect. It is to such upstarts that the poorer classes are externally most civil ; but it is also such persons whom they most hate and abhor. They flatter them to their faces, 'tis true, even to *nausea* ; but they seldom spare them in their absence. Of this very class, I believe, is your agent, Yellow Sam ; so that any favourable expressions you may have heard from your tenantry towards him were, most probably, the result of dissimulation and fear. Besides, sir, here is a testimonial from M'Evoy's parish priest, in which his father is spoken of as an honest, moral, and industrious man."

"If what you say, Mr. O'Brien, is correct," observed the colonel, "you know the Irish peasantry much better than I do. Decidedly I have always thought them, in conversation, exceedingly candid and sincere. With respect to testimonials from priests to landlords in behalf of their tenants, upon my honour I am sick of them. I actually received, about four years ago, such an excellent character of two tenants as induced me to suppose them worthy of encouragement. But what was the fact ? Why, sir, they were two of the greatest firebrands on my estate, and put both me and my agent to great trouble and expense. No, sir, I wouldn't give a curse for a priest's

testimonials upon such an occasion. These fellows were subsequently convicted of arson on the clearest evidence, and transported."

"Well, sir, I grant that you may have been misled in that instance. However, from what I have observed, the two great faults of Irish landlords are these:—In the first place, they suffer themselves to remain ignorant of their tenantry; so much so, indeed, that they frequently deny them access and redress when the poor people are anxious to acquaint them with their grievances; for it is usual with landlords to refer them to those very agents against whose cruelty and rapacity they are appealing. This is a *carte blanche* to the agent to trample upon them if he pleases. In the next place, Irish landlords too frequently employ ignorant and needy men to manage their estates; men who have no character, no property or standing in society, beyond the reputation of being keen, shrewd, and active. These persons, sir, make fortunes; and what means can they have of accumulating wealth except by cheating either the landlord or his tenants? A history of their conduct would be a black catalogue of dishonesty, oppression, and treachery. Respectable men, resident on or near the estate, possessing both character and property, should always be selected for this important trust. But, above all things, the curse of a tenantry is a *percentage* agent; he racks, and drives, and oppresses, without consideration either of market or produce, in order that his receipts may be ample, and his own income large."

"Why, O'Brien, you appear to be better acquainted with all this sort of thing than I, who am a landed proprietor."

"By-the-bye, sir, without meaning you any disrespect, it is the landlords of Ireland who know least about the great mass of its inhabitants, and, I might also add, about its history, its literature, the manners of the people, their customs, and their prejudices. The peasantry know this, and too often practise upon their ignorance. There is a landlord's *Vade mecum* sadly wanted in Ireland, colonel."

"Ah! very good, O'Brien—very good! Well, I shall certainly inquire into this case, and if I find that Yellow Sam has been playing the oppressor, out he goes. I am now able to manage him, which I could not readily do before, for, by-the-bye, he had mortgages on my property."

"I would take it, colonel, as a personal favour if you would investigate the transaction I have mentioned."

"Undoubtedly I shall, and that very soon. But about this

outrage committed against the boy himself? We had better take his informations, and punish the fellow."

"Certainly; I think that is the best way. His conduct to the poor youth has been merciless and detestable. We must put him out of this part of the country."

"Call the lad in. In this case I shall draw up the informations myself, although Gregg usually does that."

Jemmy, assisted by the curate, entered the room, and the humane colonel desired him, as he appeared ill, to sit down.

"What is your name?" asked the colonel.

"James M'Evoy," he replied. "I'm the son, sir, of a man who was once a tenant of yours."

"Ay! and pray how did he cease to be a tenant of mine?"

"Why, sir, your agent, Yallow Sam, put him out of our farm, when my poor mother was on her sick-bed. He chated my father, sir, out of some money—part of our rent it was, that he didn't give him a receipt for. When my father went to him afterwards for the receipt, Yallow Sam abused him, and called him a rogue, and that, sir, was what no man ever called my father either before or since. My father, sir, threatened to tell you about it, and you came to the country soon after; but Yallow Sam got very great wid my father at that time, and sent him to sell bullocks for him about fifty miles off, but when he came back again you had left the country. Thin, sir, Yallow Sam said nothing till the next half-year's rent became due, whin he came down on my father for all—that is, what he hadn't got the receipt for and the other gale, and, without any warning in the world, put him out. My father offered to pay all, but he said he was a rogue, and that you had ordered him off the estate. In less than a week after this he put a man that married a bastard daughter of his own into our house and place. That's God's truth, sir, and you'll find it so, if you inquire into it. It's a common trick of his to keep back receipts, and make the tenants pay double."¹

"Sacred heaven, O'Brien, can this be possible?"

"Your best way, colonel, is to inquire into it."

"Was not your father able to educate you at home, my boy?"

"No, sir; we soon got into poverty after we left your farm; and another thing, sir, there was no Latin school in our neighbourhood."

¹ This is fact. The individual here alluded to frequently kept back receipts when receiving rents, under pretence of hurry, and afterwards compelled the tenants to pay the same gale twice!

"For what purpose did you become a poor scholar?"

"Why, sir, I hoped one day or other to be able to raise my father and mother out of the distress that Yallow Sam brought on us."

"By heaven, a noble aim, and a noble sentiment. And what has this d——d fellow of a schoolmaster done to you?"

"Why, sir, yesterday, when I went back to the school, he abused me, and said that he supposed most of my relations were hanged—spoke ill of my father, and said that my mother"—here the tears started to his eyes—he sobbed aloud.

"Go on, and be cool," said the colonel; "what did he say of your mother?"

"He said, sir, that she was never married to my father. I know I was wrong, sir—but if it was the king on his throne that said it of my mother, I'd call *him* a liar. I called him a liar, and a coward, and a villain. Ay, sir, and if I had been able, I would have trampled him under my feet."

The colonel looked steadily at him, but the open clear eye which the boy turned upon him was full of truth and independence.

"And you will find," said the soldier, "that this spirited defence of your mother will be the most fortunate action of your life. Well; he struck you then, did he?"

"He knocked me down, sir, with his fist—then kicked me in the back and sides. I think some of my ribs are broke."

"Ay!—no doubt, no doubt," said the colonel. "And you were only after recovering from this fever which is so prevalent?"

"I wasn't a week out of it, sir."

"Well, my boy, we shall punish him for you."

"Sir, would you hear me for a word or two, if it would be pleasing to you?"

"Speak on," said the colonel.

"I would rather change his punishment to—I would—that is—if it would be agreeable to you—it's this, sir—I wouldn't trouble you now against the master, if you'd be pleased to rightify my father, and punish Yallow Sam. Oh, sir, for God's sake, put my heartbroken father into his farm again! If you would, sir, I could shed my blood, or lay down my life for you, or for any belonging to you. I'm but a poor boy, sir, low and humble; but they say there's a greater Being than the greatest in this world, that listens to the just prayers of the poor and friendless. I was never happy, sir, since we left it—neither was any of us; and when we'd sit, cowl'd and hungry, about our hearth, we used to be talking of the pleasant days we spent in

it, till the tears would be smothered in curses against him that put us out of it. Oh, sir, if you could know all that a poor and honest family suffers when they are thrown into distress by want of feeling in their landlords, or by the dishonesty of agents, you would consider my father's case. I'm his favourite son, sir, and good right have I to speak for him. If you could know the sorrow, the misery, the drooping down of the spirits, that lies upon the countenances and the hearts of such people, you wouldn't, as a man and a Christian, think it below you to spread happiness and contentment among them again. In the morning they rise to a day of hardship, no matter how bright and cheerful it may be to others—nor is there any hope of a brighter day for *them*; and at night they go to their hard beds to strive to sleep away their hunger in spite of cold and want. If you could see how the father of a family, after striving to bear up, sinks down at last; if you could see the look he gives at the childre that he would lay down his heart's blood for, when they sit naked and hungry about him; and the mother, too, with her kind word and sorrowful smile, proud of them in all their destitution, but her heart breaking silently all the time, her face wasting away, her eye dim, and her strength gone!—Sir, make one such family happy—for all this has been in my father's house! Give us back our light spirits, our pleasant days, and our cheerful hearts again! We lost them through the villainy of your agent. Give them back to us, for you *can* do it; but you can *never* pay us for what we suffered. Give us, sir, our farm, our green fields, our house, and every spot and nook that we had before. We love the place, sir, for its own sake; it is the place of our fathers, and our hearts are in it. I often think I see the smooth river that runs through it, and the meadows that I played in when I was a child—the glen behind our house, the mountains that rose before us when we left the door, the thorn-bush at the garden, the hazels in the glen, the little bleach-green beside the river—oh, sir, don't blame me for crying, for they are all before my eyes, in my ears, and in my heart! Many a summer evening have I gone to the march-ditch of the farm that my father's now in, and looked at the place I loved till the tears blinded me, and I asked it as a favour of God to restore us to it! Sir, we are in great poverty at home; before God we are; and my father's heart is breaking!"

The colonel drew his breath deeply, rubbed his hands, and as he looked at the fine countenance of the boy—expressing, as it did, enthusiasm and sorrow—his eyes lightened with a gleam

of indignation. It could not be against the poor scholar; no, gentle reader, but against his own agent.

"O'Brien," said he, "what do you think? And this noble boy is the son of a man who belongs to a class of which I am ignorant! By heaven, we landlords are, I fear, a guilty race."

"Not all, sir," replied the curate. "There are noble exceptions among them; their faults are more the faults of omission than commission."

"Well, well, no matter. Come, I will draw up the informations against this man; afterwards I have something to say to you, my boy," he added, addressing Jemmy, "that will not, I trust, be unpleasant."

He then drew up the informations as strongly as he could word them, after which Jemmy deposed to their truth and accuracy, and the colonel, rubbing his hands again, said—

"I will have the fellow secured. When you go into town, Mr. O'Brien, I'll thank you to call on Meares, and hand him these. He will lodge the miscreant in limbo this very night."

Jemmy then thanked him, and was about to withdraw, when the colonel desired him to remain a little longer.

"Now," said he, "your father has been treated inhumanly, I believe; but no matter. That is not the question. Your sentiments, and conduct, and your affection for your parents are noble, my boy. At present, I say, the question is not whether the history of your father's wrongs be true or false; you at least *believe* it to be true. From this forward—but by-the-bye, I forgot; how could your becoming a poor scholar relieve your parents?"

"I intended to become a priest, sir, and then to help them."

"Ay! so I thought; and provided your father were restored to his farm, would you be still disposed to become a priest?"

"I would, sir; next to helping my father, that is what I wish to be."

"O'Brien, what would it cost to prepare him respectably for the priesthood? I mean, to defray his expenses until he completes his preparatory education, in the first place, and afterwards during his residence in Maynooth?"

"I think two hundred pounds, sir, would do it easily and respectably."

"I do not think it would. However, do you send him—but first let me ask what progress he has already made?"

"He has read—in fact he *is* nearly prepared to enter Maynooth. His progress has been very rapid."

"Put him to some respectable boarding-school for a year;

then let him enter Maynooth, and I will bear the expense. But remember I do not adopt this course in consequence of his father's history. Not I, by Jupiter ; I do it on his own account. He is a noble boy, and full of fine qualities, if they be not nipped by neglect and poverty. I loved my father myself, and fought a duel on his account ; and I honour the son who has spirit to defend his absent parent."

"This is a most surprising turn in the boy's fortunes, colonel."

"He deserves it. A soldier, Mr. O'Brien, is not without his enthusiasm, nor can he help admiring it in others, when nobly and virtuously directed. To see a boy in the midst of poverty encountering the hardships and difficulties of life, with the hope of raising up his parents from distress to independence, has a touch of sublimity in it."

"Ireland, colonel, abounds with instances of similar virtue, brought out, probably, into fuller life and vigour by the sad changes and depressions which are weighing down the people. In her glens, on her bleak mountain sides, and in her remotest plains, such examples of pure affection, uncommon energy, and humble heroism are to be seen ; but, unfortunately, few persons of rank or observation mingle with the Irish people, and their many admirable qualities pass away without being recorded in the literature of their country. They are certainly a strange people, colonel,—almost an anomaly in the history of the human race. They are the only people who can rush out from the very virtues of private life to the perpetration of crimes at which we shudder. There is, to be sure, an outcry about their oppression ; but that is wrong. Their indigence and ignorance are rather the result of neglect—of neglect, sir, from the government of the country—from the earl to the squireen. They have been taught little that is suitable to their stations and duties in life, either as tenants who cultivate our lands, or as members of moral or Christian society."

"Well, well ; I believe what you say is too true. But touching the records of virtue in humble life, pray who would record it when nothing goes down nowadays but what is either monstrous or fashionable ?"

"Very true, colonel ; yet, in my humble opinion, a virtuous Irish peasant is far from being so low a character as a profligate man of rank."

"Well, well, well ! Come, O'Brien, we will drop the subject. In the meantime, touching this boy, as I said, he must be looked to, for he has that in him which ought not to be

neglected. We shall now see that this d——d pedagogue be punished for his cruelty."

The worthy colonel in a short time dismissed poor Jemmy with an exulting heart ; but not until he had placed a sufficient sum in the curate's hands for enabling him to make a respectable appearance. Medical advice was also procured for him, by which he soon overcame the effects of his master's brutality.

On their way home Jemmy related to his friend the conversation which he had had with his bishop in the shed, and the kind interest which that gentleman had taken in his situation and prospects. Mr. O'Brien told him that the bishop was an excellent man, possessing much discrimination and benevolence ; "and so," said he, "is the Protestant clergyman who accompanied him. They have both gone among the people during this heavy visitation of disease and famine administering advice and assistance ; restraining them from those excesses which they sometimes commit when, driven by hunger, they attack provision carts, bakers' shops, or the houses of farmers who are known to possess a stock of meal or potatoes. God knows, it is an excusable kind of robbery ; yet it is right to restrain them."

"It is a pleasant thing, sir, to see clergymen of every religion working together to make the people happy."

"It is certainly so," replied the curate ; "and I am bound to say, in justice to the Protestant clergy, that there is no class of men in Ireland, James, who do *so much* good without distinction of creed or party. They are generally kind and charitable to the poor ; so are their wives and daughters. I have often known them to cheer the sick-bed—to assist the widow and the orphan—to advise and admonish the profligate, and, in some instances, even to reclaim them. But now about your own prospects ; I think you should go and see your family as soon as your health permits you."

"I would give my right hand," replied Jemmy, "just to see them, if it was only for five minutes ; but I cannot go. I vowed that I would never enter my native parish until I should become a Catholic clergyman. I vowed that, sir, to God—and with his assistance I will keep my vow."

"Well," said the curate, "you are right. And now let me give you a little advice. In the first place, learn to speak as correctly as you can ; lay aside the vulgarisms of conversation peculiar to the common people, and speak precisely as you would write. By-the-bye, you acquitted yourself to admiration

with the colonel. A little stumbling there was in the beginning; but you got over it. You see, James, the force of truth and simplicity. I could scarcely restrain my tears while you spoke."

"If I had not been in earnest, sir, I could never have spoken as I did."

"You never could. Truth, James, is the foundation of all eloquence; he who knowingly speaks what is not true may dazzle and perplex; but he will never touch with that power and pathos which spring from truth. Fiction is successful only by borrowing her habiliments. Now, James, for a little more advice. Don't let the idea of having been a poor scholar deprive you of self-respect; neither let your unexpected turn of fortune cause you to forget what you have suffered. Hold a middle course; be firm and independent; without servility on the one hand, or vanity on the other. You have also too much good sense, and, I hope, too much religion, to ascribe what this day has brought forth in your behalf to any other cause than God. It has pleased him to raise you from misery to ease and comfort; to him, therefore, be it referred, and to him be your thanks and prayers directed. You owe him much, for you now can perceive the value of what he has done for you! May his name be blessed!"

Jemmy was deeply affected by the kindness of his friend, for such, in friendship's truest sense, was he to him. He expressed the obligations which he owed him, and promised to follow the excellent advice he had just received.

The schoolmaster's conduct to the poor scholar had, before the close of the day on which it occurred, been known through the parish. Thady O'Rorke, who had just recovered from the epidemic, felt so bitterly exasperated at the outrage that he brought his father to the parish priest, to whom he gave a detailed account of all that our hero and the poorer children of the school had suffered. In addition to this, he went among the more substantial farmers of the neighbourhood, whose co-operation he succeeded in obtaining for the laudable purpose of driving the tyrant out of the parish.

Jemmy, who still lived at the "House of Entertainment," on hearing what they intended to do, begged Mr. O'Brien to allow him, provided the master should be removed from the school, to decline prosecuting him.

"He has been cruel to me, no doubt," he added; "still I cannot forget that his cruelty has been the means of changing my condition in life so much for the better. If he is put out of

the parish it will be punishment enough ; and, to say the truth, sir, I can *now* forgive everybody. Maybe had I been still *neglected* I might punish him ; but in the meantime, to show him and the world that I didn't deserve his severity, I forgive h.m."

Mr. O'Brien was not disposed to check a sentiment that did the boy's heart so much honour ; he waited on the colonel the next morning, acquainted him with Jemmy's wishes, and the indictment was quashed immediately after the schoolmaster's removal from his situation.

Our hero's personal appearance was by this time incredibly changed for the better. His countenance, naturally expressive of feeling, firmness, and intellect, now appeared to additional advantage ; so did his whole person, when dressed in a decent suit of black. No man acquainted with life can be ignorant of the improvement which genteel apparel produces in the carriage, tone of thought, and principles of an individual. It gives a man confidence, self-respect, and a sense of equality with his companions ; it inspires him with energy, independence, delicacy of sentiment, courtesy of manner, and elevation of language. The face becomes manly, bold, and free ; the brow open, and the eye clear ; there is no slinking through narrow lanes and back streets, but, on the contrary, the smoothly-dressed man steps out with a determination not to spare the earth, or to walk as if he trod on eggs or razors. No ; he brushes onward ; is the first to accost his friends ; gives a careless bow to this, a bluff nod to that, and a patronising "how-d'ye-do" to a third, who is worse dressed than himself. Trust me, kind reader, that good clothes are calculated to advance a man in life nearly as well as good principles, especially in a world like this, where external appearance is taken as the exponent of what is beneath it.

Jemmy, by the advice of his friend, now waited upon the bishop, who was much surprised at the uncommon turn of fortune which had taken place in his favour. He also expressed his willingness to help him forward, as far as lay in his power, towards the attainment of his wishes. In order to place the boy directly under suitable patronage, Mr. O'Brien suggested that the choice of the school should be left to the bishop. This perhaps flattered him a little, for who is without his weaknesses ? A school near the metropolis was accordingly fixed upon, to which Jemmy, now furnished with a handsome outfit, was accordingly sent. There we will leave him, reading with eagerness and assiduity, whilst we return to look after Colonel B. and his agent.

One morning after James's departure the colonel's servant waited upon Mr. O'Brien with a note from his master, intimating a wish to see him. He lost no time in waiting upon that gentleman, who was then preparing to visit the estate which he had so long neglected.

"I am going," said he, "to see how my agent, Yellow Sam, as they call him, and my tenants agree. It is my determination, Mr. O'Brien, to investigate the circumstances attending the removal of our *protégé's* father. I shall, moreover, look closely into the state and feelings of my tenants in general. It is probable I shall visit many of them, and certain that I will inquire into the character of this man."

"It is better late than never, colonel; but still, though I am a friend to the people, yet I would recommend you to be guided by great caution, and the evidence of respectable and disinterested men only. You must not certainly entertain all the complaints you may hear without clear proof, for I regret to say that too many of the idle and political portion of the peasantry are apt to throw the blame of their own folly and ignorance—yes, and of their crimes also—upon those who in no way have occasioned either their poverty or their wickedness. They are frequently apt to consider themselves oppressed, if concessions are not made to which they, as idle and indolent men, who neglect their own business, have no fair claim. Bear this in mind, colonel—be cool, use discrimination, take your proofs from others besides the parties concerned, or their friends, and, depend upon it, you will arrive at the truth."

"O'Brien, you would make an excellent agent."

"I have studied the people, sir, and know them. I have breathed the atmosphere of their prejudices, habits, manners, customs, and superstitions. I have felt them all myself, as they feel them; but I trust I have got above their influence where it is evil, for there are many fine touches of character among them which I should not willingly part with. No, sir; I should make a bad agent, having no capacity for transacting business. I could direct and overlook, but nothing more."

"Well, then, I shall set out to-morrow; and in the meantime permit me to say that I am deeply sensible of your kindness in pointing out my duty as an Irish landlord, conscious that I have too long neglected it."

"Kindness, colonel, is the way to the Irish heart. There is but one man in Ireland who can make an Irishman ungrateful, and that is his priest. I regret that in times of political excitement, and especially during electioneering struggles, the

interference of the clergy produces disastrous effects upon the moral feelings of the people. When a tenant meets the landlord whom he has deserted in the critical moment of the contest—the landlord to whom he has solemnly promised his support, and who perhaps, as a member of the legislature, has advocated his claims and his rights, and who probably has been kind and indulgent to him—I say, when he meets him afterwards, his shufflings, excuses, and evasions are grievous. He is driven to falsehood and dissimulation in explaining his conduct; he expresses his repentance, curses himself for his ingratitude, promises well for the future, but seldom or never can be prevailed upon to state candidly that he acted in obedience to the priest. In some instances, however, he admits this, and inveighs bitterly against his interference—but this is only whilst in the presence of his landlord. I think, colonel, that no clergyman, set apart as he is for the concerns of a better world, should become a firebrand in the secular pursuits and turmoils of this.”

“I wish, Mr. O’Brien, that every clergyman of your Church resembled you, and acted up to your sentiments; our common country would be the better for it.”

“I endeavour to act, sir, as a man who has purely spiritual duties to perform. It is not for us to be agitated and inflamed by the political passions and animosities of the world. Our lot is differently cast, and we ought to abide by it. The priest and politician can no more agree than good and evil. I speak with respect to *all* Churches.”

“And so do I.”

“What stay do you intend to make, colonel?”

“I think about a month. I shall visit some of my old friends there, from whom I expect a history of the state and feelings of the country.”

“You will hear both sides of the question before you act?”

“Certainly. I have written to my agent to say that I shall look very closely into my own affairs on *this* occasion. I thought it fair to give him notice.”

“Well, sir, I wish you all success.”

“Farewell, Mr. O’Brien; I shall see you immediately after my return.”

The colonel performed his journey by slow stages until he reached “the hall of his fathers”—for it was such, although he had not for years resided in it. It presented the wreck of a fine old mansion, situated within a crescent of stately beeches, whose moss-covered and ragged trunks gave symptoms of decay and

neglect. The lawn had been once beautiful, and the demesne a noble one; but that which blights the industry of the tenant—the curse of absenteeism—had also left the marks of ruin stamped upon every object around him. The lawn was little better than a common; the pond was thick with weeds and sluggish water-plants, that almost covered its surface; and a light, elegant bridge, that spanned a river which ran before the house, was also moss-grown and dilapidated. The hedges were mixed up with briers, the gates broken or altogether removed, the fields were rank with the ruinous luxuriance of weeds, and the grass-grown avenues spoke of solitude and desertion. The still appearance, too, of the house itself, and the absence of smoke from its time-tinged chimneys—all told a tale which constitutes one, perhaps the *greatest*, portion of Ireland's misery! Even then he did not approach it with the intention of residing there during his sojourn in the country. It was not habitable, nor had it been so for years. The road by which he travelled lay near it, and he could not pass without looking upon the place where a long line of gallant ancestors had succeeded each other, lived their span, and disappeared in their turn.

He contemplated it for some time in a kind of reverie. There it stood, sombre and silent; its grey walls mouldering away; its windows dark and broken; like a man forsaken by the world, compelled to bear the storms of life without the hand of a friend to support him, though age and decay render him less capable of enduring them. For a moment fancy re-peopled it: again the stir of life, pastime, mirth, and hospitality echoed within its walls; the train of his long-departed relatives returned; the din of rude and boisterous enjoyment peculiar to the times; the cheerful tumult of the hall at dinner; the family feuds and festivities; the vanities and the passions of those who now slept in dust; all—all came before him once more, and played their part in the vision of the moment!

As he walked on, the flitting wing of a bat struck him lightly in its flight. He awoke from the remembrances which crowded on him, and, resuming his journey, soon arrived at the inn of the nearest town, where he stopped that night. The next morning he saw his agent for a short time, but declined entering on business. For a few days more he visited most of the neighbouring gentry, from whom he received sufficient information to satisfy him that neither himself nor his agent was popular among his tenantry. Many flying reports of the agent's dishonesty and tyranny were mentioned to him, and in every instance he took down the names of the parties, in order to

ascertain the truth. M'Evoy's case had occurred more than ten years before, but he found that the remembrance of the poor man's injury was strongly and bitterly retained in the recollections of the people—a circumstance which extorted from the blunt but somewhat sentimental soldier a just observation. "I think," said he, "that there are no people in the world who remember an injury or a kindness so long as the Irish."

When the tenants were apprised of his presence among them, they experienced no particular feeling upon the subject. During all his former visits to his estate he appeared merely the creature and puppet of his agent, who never acted the bully, nor tricked himself out in his brief authority more imperiously than he did before him. The knowledge of this damped them, and rendered any expectations of redress or justice from the landlord a matter not to be thought of.

"If he wasn't so great a man," they observed, "who thinks it below him to speak to his tenants, or hear their complaints, there ud be some hope; but that rip of hell, Yallow Sam, can wind him round his finger like a thread, an' does too. There's no use in thinkin' to petition him, or to lodge a complaint against Stony Heart; for the first thing he'd do ud be to put it into yallow boy's hands, an' thin, God be merciful to thim that ud complain. No, no; the best way is to wait till Sam's masther¹ takes him; an' who knows but that ud be sooner nor we think."

"They say," another would reply, "that the colonel is a good gentleman for all that, an' that if he could *once* know the truth, he'd pitch the 'yellow boy' to the 'ould boy.'"

No sooner was it known by his tenantry that the head landlord was disposed to redress their grievances and hear their complaints, than the smothered attachment, which long neglect had nearly extinguished, now burst forth with uncommon power.

"Augh! by this an' by that, the throe blood's in him still. The rale gentleman to dale wid for ever! We knew he only wanted to come at the thruth, an' thin he'd back us agin the villain that harrished us! To the divil wid skamin' upstarts, that hasn't the ould blood in thim! What are they but sconces an' chates, every one o' thim, barrin' an odd one, for a wondher?"

The colonel's estate now presented a scene of gladness and bustle. Every person who felt in the slightest degree aggrieved

¹ The devil—a familiar name for him when mentioned in connection with a villain.

got his petition drawn up ; and, but that we fear our sketch is already too long, we would gratify the reader's curiosity by submitting a few of them. It is sufficient to say that they came to him in every shape—in all the variety of diction that the poor English language admits of—in the schoolmaster's best copy-hand, and choicest sesquipedalianism of pedantry—in the severer but more scriptural terms of the parish clerk—in the engrossing hand and legal phrase of the attorney's—in the military form, evidently redolent of the shrewd old pensioner—and in the classical style of the young priest ; for each and all of the foregoing were enlisted in the cause of those who had petitions to send in "to the colonel himself, God bless him !"

Early in the morning of the day on which the colonel had resolved to compare the complaints of his tenantry with the character which his agent gave him of the complaints, he sent for the former, and the following dialogue took place between them.

"Good morning, Mr. Carson. Excuse me for requesting your presence to-day earlier than usual. I have taken it into my head to know something of my own tenantry, and as they have pestered me with petitions and letters and complaints, I am anxious to have your opinion, as you know them better than I do."

"Before we enter on business, colonel, allow me to inquire if you feel relieved of that bilious attack you complained of the day before yesterday ? I'm of a bilious habit myself, and know something about the management of digestion."

"A good digestion is an excellent thing, Carson. As for me, I drank too much claret with my friend B——y ; and there's the secret. I don't like cold wines ; they never agree with me."

"Nor do I ; they are not constitutional. Your father was celebrated for his wines, colonel. I remember an anecdote told me by Captain Ferguson—by-the-bye, do you know where Ferguson could be found now, sir ?"

"Not I. What wines do *you* drink, Carson ?"

"A couple of glasses of sherry, sir, at dinner ; and about ten o'clock, a glass of brandy and water."

"Carson, you are sober and *prudent*. Well, about these cursed petitions ; you must help me to dispose of them. Why, a man would think, by the tenor of them, that these tenants of mine are ground to dust by a tyrant."

"Ah, colonel, you know little about these fellows. They would make black white. Go and take a ride, sir, return about four o'clock, and I will have everything as it ought to be."

"I wish to heaven, Carson, I had your talents for business. Do you think my tenants attached to me?"

"Attached, sir! they are ready to cut your throat or mine on the first convenient opportunity. You could not conceive their knavishness and dishonesty, except you happened to be an agent for a few years."

"So I have been told, and I am resolved to remove every dishonest tenant from my estate. Is there not a man, for instance, called Brady? He has sent me a long-winded petition here. What do you think of him?"

"Show me the petition, colonel."

"I cannot lay my hand on it just now; but you shall see it. In the meantime, what's your opinion of the fellow?"

"Brady! Why, I know the man particularly well. He is one of my favourites. What the deuce could the fellow petition about, though? I promised the other day to renew his lease for him."

"Oh, then, if he be a favourite of yours, his petition may go to the devil, I suppose? Is the man honest?"

"Remarkably so; and has paid his rents very punctually. He is one of our safest tenants."

"Do you know a man called Cullen?"

"The most litigious scoundrel on the estate."

"Indeed! Oh, then, we must look into the merits of *his* petition, as he is *not* honest. Had he been honest like Brady, Carson, I should have dismissed it."

"Cullen, sir, is a dangerous fellow. Do you know, that rascal has charged me with keeping back his receipts, and with making him pay double rent!—ha, ha, ha! Upon my honour, it's a fact."

"The scoundrel! We shall sift him to some purpose, however."

"If you take my advice, sir, you will send him about his business; for if it be once known that you listen to malicious petitions, my authority over such villains as Cullen is lost."

"Well, I set him aside for the present. Here's a long list of others, all of whom have been oppressed, forsooth. Is there a man called M'Evoy on my estate?—Dominick M'Evoy, I think."

"M'Evoy! Why, that rascal, sir, has not been your tenant for ten years! *His* petition, colonel, is a key to the nature of their grievances in general."

"I believe you, Carson—most implicitly do I *believe* that. Well, about this rascal?"

"Why, it is so long since that, upon my honour, I cannot exactly remember the circumstances of his misconduct. He ran away."

"Who is in his farm now, Carson?"

"A very decent man, sir. One Jackson, an exceedingly worthy, honest, industrious fellow. I take some credit to myself for bringing Jackson on your estate."

"Is Jackson married? Has he a family?"

"Married! Let me see! Why—yes—I *believe* he is. Oh, by-the-bye, now I think of it, he *is* married, and to a very respectable woman, too. Certainly, I remember—she usually accompanies him when he pays his rents."

"Then your system must be a good one, Carson; you weed out the idle and profligate, to replace them by the honest and industrious?"

"Precisely so, sir; that is my system."

"Yet there are agents who invert your system in some cases; who drive out the honest and industrious, and encourage the idle and profligate; who connive at them, Carson, and fill the estates they manage with their own dependents or relatives, as the case may be. You have been always opposed to this, and I'm glad to hear it."

"No man, Colonel B——, filling the situation which I have the honour to hold under you, could study your interests with greater zeal and assiduity. God knows, I have had so many quarrels, and feuds, and wranglings with these fellows, in order to squeeze money out of them to meet your difficulties, that, upon my honour, I think if it required five dozen oaths to hang me, they could be procured upon your estate. An agent, colonel, who is faithful to the landlord is seldom popular with the tenants."

"I can't exactly see that, Carson; and I have known an unpopular landlord rendered highly popular by the judicious management of an enlightened and honest agent, who took no bribes, Carson, and who neither extorted from nor ground the tenantry under him—something like a counterpart of yourself. But you may be right in general."

"Is there anything particular, colonel, in which I can assist you now?"

"Not now. I was anxious to hear the character of those fellows from you, who know them. Come down about eleven or twelve o'clock; these petitioners will be assembled, and you may be able to assist me."

"Colonel, remember I forewarn you that you are plunging

into a mesh of difficulties which you will never be able to disentangle. Leave the fellows to me, sir; I know how to deal with them. Besides, upon my honour, you are not equal to it in point of health. You look ill. Pray allow me to take home their papers, and I shall have all clear and satisfactory before two o'clock. They know my method, sir."

"They do, Carson, they *do*; but I am anxious they should also know *mine*. Besides, it will amuse me, for I want excitement. Good day, for the present; you will be down about twelve, or one at the furthest."

"Certainly, sir. Good morning, colonel."

The agent was too shrewd a man not to perceive that there were touches of cutting irony in some of the colonel's expressions, which he did not like. There was a dryness, too, in the tone of his voice and words, blended with a copiousness of good humour, which, taken altogether, caused him to feel uncomfortable. He could have wished the colonel at the devil; yet had the said colonel never been more familiar in his life, nor, with one or two exceptions, readier to agree with almost every observation made to him.

"Well," thought he, "*he* may act as he pleases; *I* have feathered my nest, at all events, and disregard him."

Colonel B——, in fact, ascertained, with extreme regret, that something was necessary to be done to secure the good-will of his tenants; that the conduct of his agent had been marked by rapacity and bribery almost incredible. He had exacted from the tenantry in general the performance of duty-labour to such an extent that his immense agricultural farms were managed with little expense to himself. If a poor man's corn were drop ripe, or his hay in a precarious state, or his turf undrawn, he must suffer his oats, hay, and turf to be lost, in order to secure the crops of the agent. If he had spirit to refuse, he must expect to become a martyr to his resentment. In renewing leases his extortions were exorbitant: ten, thirty, forty, and fifty guineas he claimed as a fee for his favour, according to the ability of the party; yet this was quite distinct from the renewal fine, and went into his own pocket. When such "glove money" was not to be had, he would accept a cow or horse, to which he usually made a point to take a fancy; or he wanted to purchase a firkin of butter at that particular time, and the poor people usually made every sacrifice to avoid his vengeance. It is due to Colonel B—— to say that he acted in the investigation of his agent's conduct with the strictest honour and impartiality. He scrutinised every statement thoroughly,

pleaded for him as temperately as he could; found, or pretended to find, extenuating motives for his most indefensible proceedings; but all would not do. The cases were so clear and evident against him, even in the opinion of the neighbouring gentry, who had been for years looking upon the system of selfish misrule which he practised, that at length the generous colonel's blood boiled with indignation in his veins at the contemplation of his villainy. He accused himself bitterly for neglecting his duties as a landlord, and felt both remorse and shame for having wasted his time, health, and money in the fashionable dissipation of London and Paris whilst a cunning, unprincipled upstart played the vampire with his tenants, and turned his estate into a scene of oppression and poverty. Nor was this all: he had been endeavouring to bring the property more and more into his own clutches—a point which he would ultimately have gained had not the colonel's late succession to so large a fortune enabled him to meet his claims.

At one o'clock the tenants were all assembled about the inn door, where the colonel had resolved to hold his little court. The agent himself soon arrived, as did several other gentlemen, the colonel's friends, who knew the people, and could speak to their character.

The first man called was Dominick M'Evoy. No sooner was his name uttered than a mild, poor-looking man, rather advanced in years, came forward.

"I beg your pardon, colonel," said Carson, "here is some mistake; this man is not one of your tenants. You may remember I told you so this morning."

"I remember it," replied the colonel; "this is 'the rascal' you spoke of—is he not? M'Evoy," the colonel proceeded, "you will reply to my questions with strict truth. You will state nothing but what has occurred between you and my agent; you must not even turn a circumstance in your own favour, nor against Mr. Carson, by either adding to or taking away from it more or less than the truth. I say this to you and to all present; for, upon my honour, I shall dismiss the first case in which I discover a falsehood."

"Wid the help o' the Almighty, sir, I'll state nothing but the bare thruth."

"How long are you off my estate?"

"Ten years, your honour, or a little more."

"How came you to run away out of your farm?"

"Run away, your honour? God he knows I didn't run away, sir. The whole counthry knows that."

"Yes, run away! Mr. Carson here stated to me this morning that you ran away. He is a gentleman of integrity, and would not state a falsehood."

"I beg your pardon, colonel, not positively. I told you I did not exactly remember the circumstances; I said I thought so; but I may be wrong, for indeed my memory of facts is not good. M'Evoy, however, is a very *honest man*, and I have no doubt will state everything as it happened, fairly and without malice."

"An honest '*rascal*,' I suppose you mean, Mr. Carson," said the colonel bitterly. "Proceed, M'Evoy."

M'Evoy stated the circumstances precisely as the reader is already acquainted with them, after which the colonel turned round to his agent and asked what he had to say in reply.

"You cannot expect, Colonel B——," he replied, "that with such a multiplicity of business on my hands I could remember, after a lapse of ten years, the precise state of this particular case. Perhaps I may have some papers, a memorandum or so, at home, that may throw light upon it. At present I can only say that the man failed in his rents, I ejected him, and put a better tenant in his place. I cannot see a crime in that."

"Plase your honour," replied M'Evoy, "I can prove by them that's standin' to the fore this minute, as well as by this written affidavit, sir, that I offered him the full rint, havin', at the same time, as God is my judge, ped part of it afore."

"That is certainly false—an untrue and malicious statement," said Carson. "I now remember that the cause of my resentment—yes, of my just resentment—against you was your reporting that I received your rent and withheld your receipt."

"Then," observed the colonel, "there has been *more than one* charge of that nature brought against you? You mentioned *another* to me this morning, if I mistake not."

"I have made my oath, your honour, of the thruth of it; an' here is a dacent man, sir, a Protestant, that lent me the money, an' was present when I offered it to him. Mr. Smith, come forrid, sir, an' spake up for the poor man, as you're always willin' to do."

"I object to *his* evidence," said Carson; "he is my open enemy."

"I am your enemy, Mr. Carson, or rather the enemy of your corruption and want of honesty," said Smith; "but, as you say, an *open* one. I scorn to say behind your back what I wouldn't say to your face. Right well you know I was present when he tendered you his rent. I lent him part of it. But

why did you and your bailiffs turn him out when his wife was on her sick bed? Allowing that he could not pay his rent, was that any reason you should do so barbarous an act as to drag a woman from her sick bed, and she at the point of death? But we know your reasons for it."

"Gentlemen," said the colonel, "pray what character do M'Evoy and Smith here bear in the country?"

"We have known them both for years to be honest, conscientious men," said those whom he addressed; "such is their character, and in our opinion they well deserve it."

"God bless you, gentlemen!" said M'Evoy—"God bless your honours for your kind words! I'm sure, for my own part, I hope I'll always deserve your good opinion, although but a poor man *now*, God help me!"

"Pray, who occupies the farm at present, Mr. Carson?"

"The man I mentioned to you this morning, sir? His name is Jackson?"

"And pray, Mr. Carson, who is his wife?"

"Oh, by-the-bye, colonel, that's a little too close. I see the gentlemen smile; but they know I must beg to decline answering that question—not that it matters much. We have all sown our wild oats in our time—myself as well as another—ha, ha, ha!"

"The fact, under other circumstances," observed the colonel, "could never draw an inquiry from me; but as it is connected with, or probably has occasioned, a gross, unfeeling, and an unjust act of oppression towards an honest man, I therefore alluded to it as exhibiting the motives from which you acted. She is your illegitimate daughter, sir?"

"She's one o' the baker's dozen o' them, plase your honour," observed a humorous little Presbyterian, with a sarcastic face and sharp northern accent—"for feth, sir, for my part, A think he hes one on every hillhead. A'll count, your honour, on my fingers, a roun' half-dozen, aall on your estate, sir, featherin' their nests as fast as they can."

"Is this Jackson a good tenant, Mr. Carson?"

"I gave you his character this morning, Colonel B——."

"Hout, colonel," said the Presbyterian, "deil a penny rent the man pays, at aal at aal. A'll swear A hev it from Jackson's own lips. He made him a bailey, sir; he suts rent free. Ask the man, sir, for his receipts, an' A'll warrant the truth will come out."

"I have secured Jackson's attendance," said the colonel; "let him be called in."

The man in a few minutes entered.

"Jackson," said the colonel, "how long is it since you paid Mr. Carson here any rent?"

Jackson looked at Carson for his cue; but the colonel rose up indignantly. "Fellow!" he proceeded, "if you tamper with me a single moment you shall find Mr. Carson badly able to protect you. If you speak falsehood, be it at your peril."

"By jing, sir," said Jackson, "A'll say nothin' against my father-in-laa, an' A don't care who teks it well or ull. A was jist tekkin' a *gun*¹ with a fren' or two—an' d—— me, A say, A'll stick to my father-in-laa, for he hes stuck to me."

"You appear to be a hardened, drunken wretch," observed the colonel. "Will you be civil enough to show your last receipt for rent?"

"Wull A show it? A dono whether A wull or not, nor A dono whether A hev it or not; but ef aal the receipts in Europe wur burnt, d—— my blood but A'll stick to my father-in-laa."

"Your father-in-law may be proud of you," said the colonel.

"By h——, A'll back you en that," said the fellow, nodding his head, and looking round him confidently. "By h——, A say that too!"

"And I'm sorry to be compelled to add," continued the colonel, "that you may be equally proud of your father-in-law."

"A say right agane! D—— me, bit A'll back that too!" and he nodded confidently, and looked around the room once more. "A wull; d—— my blood, bit no man can say agane it. A'm married to his daughther; an', by the sun that shines, A'll still stan' up for my father-in-laa."

"Mr. Carson," said the colonel, "can you disprove these facts? Can you show that you did not expel M'Evoy from his farm, and put the husband of your illegitimate daughter into it? That you did not receive his rent, decline giving him a receipt, and afterwards compel him to pay twice, because he could not produce the receipt which you withheld?"

"Gentlemen," said Carson, not directly replying to the colonel, "there is a base conspiracy got up against me; and I can perceive, moreover, that there is evidently some unaccountable intention on the part of Colonel B—— to insult my feelings and injure my character. When paltry circumstances that have occurred above ten years ago are raked up in my teeth, I have

¹ A half-tumbler of punch.

little to say but that it proves how very badly off the colonel must have been for an imputation against my conduct and discretion as his agent, since he finds himself compelled to hunt so far back for a charge."

"That is by no means the heaviest charge I have to bring against you," replied the colonel. "There is no lack of them; nor shall you be able to complain that they are not *recent*, as well as of longer standing. Your conduct in the case of poor honest M'Evoy here is black and iniquitous. He must be restored to his farm, but by other hands than yours, and that ruffian instantly expelled from it. From this moment, sir, you cease to be my agent. You have betrayed the confidence I reposed in you; you have misled me as to the character of my tenants; you have been a deceitful, cringing, cunning, selfish, and rapacious tyrant. My people you have ground to dust; my property you have lessened in value nearly one-half, and for your motives in doing this, I refer you to certain transactions and legal documents which passed between us. There is nothing cruel or mercenary which you did not practise in order to enrich yourself. The whole tenor of your conduct is before me. Your profligacy is not only discovered, but already proved; and you played those villainous pranks, I suppose, because I have been mostly an absentee. Do not think, however, that you shall enjoy the fruits of your extortion? I will place the circumstances, and the proofs of the respective charges against you, in the hands of my solicitor, and, by the sacred heaven above me, you shall disgorge the fruits of your rapacity! My good people, I shall remain among you for another fortnight, during which time I intend to go through my estate, and set everything to rights as well as I can, until I may appoint a humane and feeling *gentleman* as my agent—such a one as will have, at least, a *character* to lose. I also take this opportunity of informing you that in future I shall visit you often, will redress your grievances, should you have any to complain of, and will give such assistance to the honest and industrious among you—but to *them only*—as I trust may make us better pleased with each other than we have been. Do not you go, M'Evoy, until I speak to you."

During these observations Carson sat with a smile, or rather a sneer, upon his lips. It was the sneer of a purse-proud villain, confident that his wealth, no matter how ill-gotten, was still wealth, and worth its value.

"Colonel," said he, "I have heard all you said, but you see me 'so strong in honesty' that I am not moved. In the course

of a few weeks I shall have purchased an estate of my own, *which I will manage differently*, for my fortune is made, sir. I intend also to give up my other agencies : I am rather old, and must retire to enjoy a little of the *otium cum dignitate*. I wish you all good morning !”

The colonel turned away in abhorrence, but disdained any reply.

“A say, Sam,” said the Presbyterian, “bring your son-in-laa wuth you.”

“An’ A say that too,” exclaimed the drunken ruffian—“A say that, A do. A’m married to his daughther ; an’ A say stull that, d——n my blood, bit A’ll stick to my father-in-laa ! That’s the point !”—and again he nodded his head, and looked round him with a drunken swagger. “A’ll stick to my father-in-laa ! A’ll do that ; feth, A wull !”¹

It is scarcely necessary to inform the reader that the colonel’s address to Carson soon got among the assembled tenantry, and a vehement volley of groans and hisses followed the discarded agent up the street.

“Ha ! bad luck to you for an ould villain ! You were made to hear on the deaf side o’ your head at last ! You may take the black wool out o’ your ears now, you rip ! The cries an’ curses o’ the widows an’ orphans that you made and oppressed has ris up agin you at the long run ! Ha ! you beggarly nager ! maybe you’ll make us neglect our own work to do yours agin ! Go an’ gather the dhry cow-cakes, you misert, an’ bring them home in your pocket, to throw on the dunghill !”

“Do you remimber the day,” said others, “you met Mr. M——, an’ you goin’ up the street wid a cake of it in your fists, undher your shabby skirts ; an’ whin the gentleman wint to shake hands wid you, how he discovered your maneness ? Three groans for Yellow Sam, the extortioner ! A short coorse to him ! Your corner’s warm below for you, you villain !”

“But now, boys, for the colonel !” they exclaimed. “Huzza for noble Colonel B——, the rale Irish gentleman, that wouldn’t see his tenants put upon by a villain !—Huzza ! Hell resave yeess, shout ! Huzza ! Huzza ! Huzza ! Huz——tundher-an’-ounze, my voice is cracked ! Where’s his coach ?—where’s his honour’s coach ? Come, boys, out wid it !—out wid it ! Tattheration to yeess, come ! We’ll dhraw it to the devil, to hell an’ back agin, if it plases him ! Success to Colonel B—— ! Blood-an’-turf ! what’ll we do for a fight ? Long life to noble Colonel B——,

¹ This dialect is local.

the poor man's friend!—long life to him for ever, an' a day longer! Whoo! my darlin's! Huzza!" etc.

The warm interest which the colonel took in M'Evoy's behalf was looked upon by the other tenants as a guarantee of his sincerity in all he promised. Their enthusiasm knew no bounds. They got out his carriage from the inn-yard and drew it through the town, though the colonel himself, beyond the fact of their shouting, remained quite ignorant of what was going forward.

After Carson's departure, the colonel's friends, having been first asked to dine with him at the inn, also took their leave, and none remained but M'Evoy, who waited with pleasing anxiety to hear what the colonel proposed to say—for he felt certain that it would be agreeable.

"M'Evoy," said the colonel, "I am truly sorry for what you have suffered through the villainy of my agent; but I will give you redress, and allow you for what you have lost by the transaction. It is true, as I have been lately told by a person who pleaded your cause nobly and eloquently, that I can never repay you for what you have suffered. However, what we can we will do. You are poor, I understand?"

"God he sees that, sir; and afflicted too, plase your honour."

"Afflicted! How is that?"

"I had a son, sir—a blessed boy! a darlin' boy!—once our comfort, an' once we thought he'd be our pride an' our staff, but——"

The poor man's tears here flowed fast; he took up the skirt of his "Cotha More," or greatcoat, and after wiping his eyes and clearing his voice, proceeded—

"He was always, as I said, a blessed boy, and we looked up to him always, sir. He saw our poverty, your honour, an' he felt it, sir, keen enough, indeed, God help him! How-an'-ever, he took it on him to go up to Munsther, sir, undher hopes of risin' us—undher the hopes, poor child—an' God knows, sir—if—oh, Jimmy, avourneen machree!—I doubt—I doubt you sunk undher what proved too many for you! I doubt my child's dead, sir—him that all our hearts wor fixed upon; and if that ud happen to be the case, nothin', sir—oh, nothin'—not even your kindness in doin' us justice, could make us happy. We would rather beg wid him, sir, nor have the best in the world widout him. His poor young heart, sir, was fixed upon the place your honour is restorin' us to; an' I'm afeard his mother, sir, would break her heart if she thought he couldn't share our

good fortune! And we don't know whether he's livin' or dead! That, sir, is what's afflictin' us. I had some notion of goin' to look for him; but he tould us he would never write, or let us hear from him, till he'd be either one thing or other."

"I can tell you, for your satisfaction, that your son is well, M'Evoy. Believe me, he is well—I know it."

"Well! Before God, does your honour spake truth? Well! Oh, sir, for His sake that died for us, an' for the sake of His blessed mother, can you tell me is my darlin' son alive?"

"He is living; is in excellent health; is as well dressed as I am; and has friends as rich and capable of assisting him as myself. But how is this? What's the matter with you? You are pale! Good God! Here, waiter! Waiter! Waiter, I say!"

The colonel rang the bell violently, and two or three waiters entered at the same moment.

"Bring a little wine and water, one of you, and let the other two remove this man to the open window. Be quick! What do you stare at?"

In a few minutes the old man recovered, and, untying the narrow, coarse cravat which he wore, wiped the perspiration off his pale face.

"Pray don't be too much affected," said the colonel. "Waiter, bring up refreshment—bring wine—be quiet and calm; you are weak, poor fellow, but we will strengthen you by-and-by."

"I am wake, sir," he replied; "for, God help us! this was a hard year upon us; and we suffered what few could bear. But he's livin', colonel. Our darlin' is livin'! Oh, colonel, your kindness went to my heart this day afore, but that was nothin'—he's livin' an' well! On my two knees, before God, I thank you for them words! I thank you a thousand an' a thousand times more for them words nor for what your honour did about Yallow Sam."

"Get up," said the colonel—"get up. The proceedings of the day have produced a revulsion of feeling which has rendered you incapable of sustaining intelligence of your son. He is well, I assure you. Bring those things to this table, waiter."

"But can your honour tell me anything in particular about him, sir? What he's doin'—or what he intends to do?"

"Yes; he is at a respectable boarding-school."

"Boordin'-school! But isn't boordin'-schools Protestants, sir?"

"Not all; he is at a Catholic boarding-school, and reading hard to be a priest, which, I hope, he will soon be. He has

good friends, and you may thank *him* for being restored to your farm."

"Glory be to my Maker for that! Oh, sir, your tenants wor desaved in you! They thought, sir, that you wor a hard-hearted gntleman, that didn't care whether they lived or died."

"I feel that I neglected them too long, M'Evoy. Now take some refreshment: eat something, and afterwards drink a few glasses of wine. Your feelings have been much excited, and you will be the better for it. Keep up your spirits. I am going to ride, and must leave you; but if you call on me to-morrow, at one o'clock, I shall have more good news for you. We must stock your farm, and enable you to enter upon it creditably."

"Sir," said M'Evoy, "you are a Protestant; but, as I hope to enther glory, I an' my wife an' childhre will pray that your bed may be made in heaven, this night; and that your honour may be led to see the thruth an' the right coorse."

The colonel then left him, and the simple man, on looking at the cold meat, bread, and wine before him, raised his hands and eyes towards heaven to thank God for his goodness, and to invoke a blessing upon his noble and munificent benefactor.

But how shall we describe the feelings of his family when, after returning home, he related the occurrences of that day. The severe and pressing exigencies under which they laboured had prevented his sons from attending the investigation that was to take place in town. Their expectations, however, were raised, and they looked out with intense anxiety for the return of their father.

At length he was seen coming slowly up the hill; the spades were thrown aside, and the whole family assembled to hear "what was done."

The father entered in silence, sat down, and after wiping his brow and laying down his hat, placing his staff across it, upon the floor, he drew his breath deeply.

"Dominick," said the wife, "what news? What was done?"

"Vara," replied Dominick, "do you remember the day—fair and handsome you wor then—when I first kissed your lips as my own darlin' wife?"

"Ah, avourneen, Dominick, don't spake of them times. The happiness we had then is long gone, acushla, in one sense."

"It's before me like yestherday, Vara—the delight that went through my heart, jist as clear as yestherday, or the blessed sun that's shinin' through the broken windy on the floor there. I remimber, Vara, saying to you that day—I don't know whether

you remimber it or not—but *I* remimber sayin' to you, that if I lived a thousand years I could never feel sich happiness as I did when I first pressed you to my heart as my own wife."

"Well, but we want to hear what happened, Dominick, achora."

"Do you remimber the words, Vara?"

"Och! I do, avourneen. *Didn't they go into my heart at the time, an' how could I forget them?* But I can't bear, somehow, to look back at what we wor then, bekase I feel my heart brakin', acushla!"

"Well, Vara, look at me. Amn't I a poor wasted crathur now, in comparishment to what I was thin?"

"God he sees the change that's in you, darlin'! But sure 'twasn't your fau't, or mine either, Dominick, avillish!"

"Well, Vara, you see me now—I'm happier—before God, I'm happier—happier a thousand degrees than I was thin! Come to my arms, asthore machree—my heart's breakin'—but it's wid happiness—don't be frightened—it's wid joy I'm sheddin' these tears—it's wid happiness an' delight I'm crying! Jimmy is livin' and well, childhre—he's livin' an' well, Vara—the star of our hearts is livin' an' well, an' happy! Kneel down, childhre—kneel down! Bend before the great God, an' thank him for his kindness to your blessed brother—to our blessed son. Bless the colonel, childhre—bless him whin you're down, Protestant an' all as he is. Oh, bless him as if you prayed for myself, or for Jimmy, that's far away from us!"

He paused for a few minutes, bent his head upon his hands as he knelt in supplication at the chair, then resumed his seat, as did the whole family, deeply affected.

"Now, childhre," said he, "I'll tell yees all; but don't any of you be so poor a crathur as I was to-day. Bear it mild an' asy, Vara, acushla, for I know it will take a start out of you. Sure we're to go back to our own ould farm! Ay, an' what's more—oh, God of heaven, bless him!—what's more, the colonel is to stock it for us, an' to help us; an' what is more, Yallow Sam is *out!*—OUT!!"

"Out!" they exclaimed. "Jimmy well, an' Yallow Sam out! Oh, father, surely——"

"Now behave, I say. Ay, and never to come in again! But who do you think got him out?"

"Who?—why God he knows. Who *could* get him out?"

"Our son, Vara—our son, childhre: Jimmy got him out, an' got ourselves back to our farm! I had it partly from the noble colonel's own lips, an' the remainder from Mr. M——y,

that I met on my way home. But there's more to come. Sure Jimmy has friends aqil to the colonel himself; an' sure he's at a Catholic boordin'-school, among gentlemen's childhre, an' in a short time he'll be a priest in full ordhers."

We here draw a veil over the delight of the family. Questions upon questions, replies upon replies, sifting and cross-examinations, followed in rapid succession, until all was known that the worthy man had to communicate.

Another simple scene followed, which, as an Irishman, I write with sorrow. When the joy of the family had somewhat subsided, the father, putting his hand in his coat-pocket, pulled out several large slices of mutton.

"Along wid all, childhre," said he, "the colonel ordhered me my dinner. I ate plenty myself, an' slipped these slices in my pocket for yees; but the divil a one o' me knows what kind o' mate it is. An' I got wine, too! Oh!—well, they may talk, but wine *is* the dhrink! Bring me the ould knife, till I make a fair divide among yees. Musha, what kind o' mate can it be, for myself doesn't remimber atin' any sort, barrin' bacon, an' a bit o' beef of an odd time?"

They all ate with an experimental air of sagacity that was rather amusing. None, however, had ever tasted mutton before, and consequently the nature and quality of the meat remained on that occasion a profound secret to M'Evoy and his family.¹ It is true they *supposed* it to be mutton, but not one of them could pronounce it to be such, from any positive knowledge of its peculiar flavour.

"Well," said Dominick, "it's no matther what the name of it is, in regard that it's good mate, anyway, for them that has enough of it."

With a fervent heart and streaming eyes did this virtuous family offer up their grateful prayers to that God whose laws they had not knowingly violated, and to whose providence they owed so much. Nor was their benefactor forgotten. The strength and energy of the Irish language, being that in which the peasantry usually pray, were well adapted to express the depth of their gratitude towards a man who had, as they said, "humbled himself to look into their wants, as if he was like one of themselves."

For upwards of ten years they had not gone to bed free from the heaviness of care, or the wasting grasp of poverty. Now

¹ There are hundreds of thousands—yes, millions—of the poorer classes in Ireland who have never tasted mutton!

their hearth was once more surrounded by peace and contentment; their burthens were removed, their pulses beat freely, and the language of happiness again was heard under their humble roof. Even sleep could not repress the vivacity of their enjoyments: they dreamt of their brother—for in the Irish heart the domestic affections hold the first place—they dreamt of the farm to which those affections had so long yearned. They trod it again as its legitimate possessors. Its fields were brighter, its corn waved with softer murmurs to the breeze, its harvests were richer, and the song of their harvest home more cheerful than before. Their delight was tumultuous, but intense; and when they arose in the morning to

“A sober certainty of waking bliss,”

they again knelt in worship to God with exulting hearts, and again offered up their sincere prayers in behalf of the just man who had asserted their rights against the oppressor.

Colonel B—— was a man who, without having been aware of it, possessed an excellent capacity for business. The neglect of his property resulted not from want of feeling, but merely from want of consideration. There had, moreover, been no precedent for him to follow. He had seen no Irishman of rank ever bestow a moment's attention on his tenantry. They had been, for the most part, absentees like himself, and felt satisfied if they succeeded in receiving their half-yearly remittance in due course, without ever reflecting for a moment upon the situation of those from whom it was drawn.

Nay, what was more—he had not seen even the *resident* gentry enter into the state and circumstances of those who lived upon their property. It was a mere accident that determined him to become acquainted with his tenants; but no sooner had he seen his duty, and come to the resolution of performing it, than the decision of his character became apparent. It is true that within the last few years the Irish landlords have advanced in knowledge. Many of them have introduced more improved systems of agriculture, and instructed their tenants in the best methods of applying them; but during the time of which we write, an Irish landlord only saw his tenants when canvassing them for their votes, and instructing them in dishonesty and perjury, not reflecting that he was then teaching them to practise the arts of dissimulation and fraud against himself. This was the late system; let us hope that it will be superseded by a better one; and that a landlord will think it a duty, but

neither a trouble nor a condescension, to look into his own affairs, and keep an eye upon the morals and habits of his tenantry.

The colonel, as he had said, remained more than a fortnight upon his estate; and, as he often declared since, the recollections arising from the good which he performed during that brief period rendered it the portion of his past life upon which he could look with most satisfaction. He did not leave the country till he saw M'Evoy and his family restored to their farm, and once more independent—until he had redressed every well-founded complaint, secured the affections of those who had before detested him, and diffused peace and comfort amongst every family upon his estate. From thenceforth he watched the interests of his tenants, and soon found that in promoting their welfare, and instructing them in their duties, he was more his own benefactor than theirs. Before many years had elapsed his property was wonderfully improved; he himself was called the "Lucky Landlord," "bekase," said the people, "ever since he spoke to an' advised his tenants, we find that it's *lucky* to live undher him. The people has heart to work wid a gintleman that won't grind thim; an' so sign's on it, every one thrives upon his land; an' dang my bones, but I believe a rotten stick ud grow on it, set in case it was thried."

In sooth, his popularity became proverbial; but it is probable that not even his justice and humanity contributed so much to this as the vigour with which he prosecuted his suit against "Yellow Sam," whom he compelled literally to "disgorge" the fruits of his heartless extortions. This worthy agent died soon after his disgrace, without any legitimate issue; and his property, which amounted to about fifty thousand pounds, is now inherited by a gentleman of the strictest honour and integrity. To this day his memory is detested by the people, who, with that bitterness by which they stigmatise a villain, have erected him into a standard of dishonesty. If a man become remarkable for want of principle, they usually say, "He's as great a rogue as Yellow Sam," or, "He is the greatest sconce that ever was in the country, *barrin'* Yellow Sam."

We now dismiss him, and request our readers at the same time not to suppose that we have held him up as a portrait of Irish agents in general. On the contrary, we believe that they constitute a most respectable class of men, who have certainly very difficult duties to perform. The Irish landlords, we are happy to say, taught by experience, have, for the most part, both seen and felt the necessity of appointing gentlemen of

property to situations so very important, and which require so much patience, consideration, and humanity in those who fill them. We trust they will persevere in this plan; but we can assure them that all the virtues of the best agent can never compensate, in the opinion of the people, for neglect in the "Head Landlord." One visit or act even of nominal kindness from *him* will at any time produce more attachment and gratitude among them than a whole life spent in good offices by an agent. Like Sterne's French Beggar, they would prefer a pinch of snuff from the one to a guinea from the other. The agent only renders them a favour, but the Head Landlord does them an honour.

Colonel B——, immediately after his return home, sent for Mr. O'Brien, who waited on him with a greater degree of curiosity than perhaps he had ever felt before. The colonel smiled as he extended his hand to him.

"Mr. O'Brien," said he, "I knew you would feel anxious to hear the result of my visit to the estate which this man with the nickname managed for me."

"*Managed*, sir! Did you say *managed*?"

"I spoke in the past time, O'Brien; he is out."

"Then your *protégé's* story was correct, sir?"

"To a tittle. O'Brien, there is something extraordinary in that boy; otherwise how could it happen that a sickly, miserable-looking creature, absolutely in tatters, could have impressed us both so strongly with a sense of the injustice done ten years ago to his father? It is indeed remarkable."

"The boy, colonel, deeply felt that act of injustice, and the expression of it came home to the heart."

"I have restored his father, however. The poor man and his family are once more happy. I have stocked their old farm for them; in fact, they now enjoy comfort and independence."

"I am glad, sir, that you have done them justice. That act alone will go far to redeem your character from the odium which the conduct of your agent was calculated to throw upon it."

"There is not probably in Ireland a landlord so popular as I am at this moment—among my tenants on that property. Restoring M'Evoy, however, is but a small part of what I have done. Carson's pranks were incredible. He was a rack-renter of the first water. A person named Brady had paid him twenty-five guineas as a *douceur*—in other words, as a bribe—for renewing a lease for him; yet, after having received the money,

he kept the poor man dangling after him, and at length told him that he was offered a larger sum by another. In some cases he kept back the receipts, and made the poor people pay twice, which was still more iniquitous. Then, sir, he would not take bank-notes in payment. No ; he was so wonderfully conscientious, and so zealously punctual, in fulfilling *my wishes*, as he told them, on the subject, that nothing would pass in payment but gold. This gold, sir, they were compelled to receive from himself at a most oppressive premium ; so that he actually fleeced them, under my name, in every conceivable manner and form of villainy. He is a usurer too, and, I am told, worth forty or fifty thousand pounds ; but, thank heaven ! he is no longer an agent of mine."

"It gives me sincere pleasure, sir, that you have at length got correct habits of thinking upon your duties as an Irish landlord ; for believe me, Colonel B——, as a subject involving a great portion of national happiness or national misery, it is entitled to the deepest and most serious consideration, not only of the class to which you belong, but of the legislature. Something should be done, sir, to improve the condition of the poorer classes. A rich country and poor inhabitants is an anomaly ; and whatever is done should be prompt and effectual. If the Irish landlords looked directly into the state of their tenantry, and set themselves vigorously to the task of bettering their circumstances, they would, I am certain, establish the tranquillity and happiness of the country at large. The great secret, colonel, of the dissensions that prevail among us is the poverty of the people. They are poor, and therefore the more easily wrought up to outrage ; they are poor, and think that *any* change must be for the better ; they are not only poor, but imaginative, and the fittest recipients for those vague speculations by which they are deluded. Let their condition be improved, and the most fertile source of popular tumult and crime is closed. Let them be taught how to labour ; let them not be bowed to the earth by rents so far above the real value of their lands. The pernicious maxims which float among them must be refuted—not by theory, but by practical lessons performed before their eyes for their own advantage. Let them be taught how to discriminate between their real interests and their prejudices ; and none can teach them all this so effectually as their landlords, if they could be roused from their apathy, and induced to undertake the task. Who ever saw a poor nation without great crimes ?"

"Very true, O'Brien—quite true. I am resolved to inspect

personally the condition of those who reside on my other estates. But now about our *protégé*. How is he doing?"

"Extremely well. I have had a letter from him a few days ago, in which he alludes to the interest you have taken in himself and his family with a depth of feeling truly affecting."

"When you write to him, let him know that I have placed his father in his old farm; and that Carson is out. Say I am sure he will conduct himself properly, in which case I charge myself with his expenses until he shall have accomplished his purpose. After that he may work his own way through life, and I have no doubt but he will do it well and honourably."

Colonel B——'s pledge on this occasion was nobly redeemed. Our humble hero pursued his studies with zeal and success. In due time he entered Maynooth, where he distinguished himself not simply for smartness as a student, but as a young man possessed of a mind far above the common order. During all this time nothing occurred worthy of particular remark, except that, in fulfilment of his former vow, he never wrote to any of his friends; for the reader should have been told that this was originally comprehended in the determination he had formed. He received ordination at the hands of his friend the bishop, whom we have already introduced to the reader, and on the same day he was appointed by that gentleman to a curacy in his own parish. The colonel, whose regard for him never cooled, presented him with fifty pounds, together with a horse, saddle, and bridle; so that he found himself in a capacity to enter upon his duties in a decent and becoming manner. Another circumstance that added considerably to his satisfaction was the appointment of Mr. O'Brien to a parish adjoining that of the bishop. James's afflictions had been the means of bringing the merits of that excellent man before his spiritual superior, who became much attached to him, and availed himself of the earliest opportunity of rewarding his unobtrusive piety and benevolence.

No sooner was his ordination completed than the long-suppressed yearnings after his home and kindred came upon his spirit with a power that could not be restrained. He took leave of his friends with a beating heart, and set out on a delightful summer morning to revisit all that had been, notwithstanding his long absence and severe trials, so strongly wrought into his memory and affections. Our readers may therefore suppose him on his journey home, and permit themselves to be led in imagination to the house of his former friend, Lanigan, where we must lay the scene for the present.

Lanigan's residence has the same comfortable and warm appearance which always distinguishes the habitation of the independent and virtuous man. What, however, can the stir, and bustle, and agitation which prevail in it mean? The daughters run out to a little mound, or natural terrace, beside the house, and look anxiously towards the road; then return, and almost immediately appear again, with the same intense anxiety to catch a glimpse of some one whom they expect. They look keenly; but why is it that their disappointment appears to be attended with such dismay? They go into their father's house once more, wringing their hands and betraying all the symptoms of affliction. Here is their mother, too, coming to peer into the distance; she is rocking with that motion peculiar to Irishwomen when suffering distress. She places her open hand upon her brows that she may collect her sight to a particular spot; she is blinded by her tears, breaks out into a low wail, and returns with something like the darkness of despair on her countenance. She goes into the house, passes through the kitchen, and enters into a bedroom; seats herself on a chair beside the bed, and renews her low but bitter wail of sorrow. Her husband is lying in that state which the peasantry know usually precedes the agonies of death.

"For the sake of the livin' God," said he, on seeing her, "is there any sign o' them?"

"Not yet, *a suillish*; but they will soon—they must soon, ashore, be here, an' thin your mind will be asy."

"Oh, Alley, Alley, if you could know what I suffer for fraid I'd die widout the priest, you'd pity me!"

"I do pity you, ashore; but don't be cast down, for I have my trust in God that he won't desert you in your last hour. You did what you could, my heart's pride; you bent before Him night an' mornin', and sure the poor neighbour never wint from your door widout lavin' his blessin' behind him."

The dying man raised his hands feebly from the bed-clothes. "Ah!" he exclaimed, "I thought I did a great dale, Alley; but now—but now—it appears nothin' to what I ought to a done when I could. Still, avourneen, my life's not unpleasant when I look back at it; for I can't remember that I ever purposely offended a livin' mortal. All I want to satisfy me is the priest."

"No, avourneen, you did not; for it wasn't in you to offend a child."

"Alley, you'll pardon me an' forgive me, acushla, if ever—if ever I did what was displasin' to you! An' call in the childhre,

till I see them about me—I want to have their forgiveness, too. I know I'll have it, for they wor good childhre, an' ever loved me."

The daughters now entered the room, exclaiming, "*Ahir dheelish* (beloved father), Pether is comin' by himself, but no priest! Blessed Queen of Heaven, what will we do? Oh! father darlin', are you to die widout the Holy Ointment?"

The sick man clasped his hands, looked towards heaven, and groaned aloud.

"Oh, it's hard this," said he. "It's hard upon me! Yet I won't be cast down. I'll trust in my good God; I'll trust in his blessed name!"

His wife, on hearing that her son was returned without the priest, sat with her face shrouded by her apron, weeping in grief that none but they who know the dependence which those belonging to her Church place in its last rites can comprehend. The children appeared almost distracted; their grief had more of that stunning character which attends unexpected calamity than of sorrow for one who is gradually drawn from life.

At length the messenger entered the room, and, almost choked with tears, stated that both priests were absent that day at Conference, and would not return till late.

The hitherto moderated grief of the wife arose to a pitch much wilder than the death of her husband could, under ordinary circumstances, occasion. To die without absolution—to pass away into eternity "unanointed, unaneled"—without being purified from the inherent stains of humanity—was to her a much deeper affliction than her final separation from him. She cried in tones of the most piercing despair, and clapped her hands, as they do who weep over the dead. Had he died in the calm confidence of having received the *Viaticum*, or Sacrament, before death, his decease would have had nothing remarkably calamitous in it, beyond usual occurrences of a similar nature. Now the grief was intensely bitter in consequence of his expected departure without the priest. His sons and daughters felt it as forcibly as his wife; their lamentations were full of the strongest and sharpest agony.

For nearly three hours did they remain in this situation; poor Lanigan sinking by degrees into that collapsed state from which there is no possibility of rallying. He was merely able to speak and recognise his family; but every moment advanced him, with awful certainty, nearer and nearer to his end.

A great number of the neighbours were now assembled, all participating in the awful feeling which predominated, and

anxious to compensate by their prayers for the absence of that confidence derived by Roman Catholics, during the approach of death, from the spiritual aid of the priest. They were all at prayer; the sick room and kitchen were crowded with his friends and acquaintances, many of whom knelt out before the door, and joined with loud voices in the Rosary which was offered up in his behalf.

In this crisis were they when a horseman, dressed in black, approached the house. Every head was instantly turned round, with a hope that it might be the parish priest or his curate; but, alas! they were doomed to experience a fresh disappointment. The stranger, though clerical enough in his appearance, presented a countenance with which none of them was acquainted. On glancing at the group who knelt around the door, he appeared to understand the melancholy cause which brought them together.

"How is this?" he exclaimed. "Is there any one here sick or dying?"

"Poor Misther Lanigan, sir, is jist departin', glory be to God! An' what is terrible all out upon himself and family, he's dyin' widout the priest. They're both at Conwhirence, sir, an' can't come—Mr. Dogherty an' his curate."

"Make way!" said the stranger, throwing himself off his horse, and passing quickly through the people. "Show me to the sick man's room—be quick, my friends—I am a Catholic clergyman."

In a moment a passage was cleared, and the stranger found himself beside the bed of death. Grief in the room was loud and bitter; but his presence stilled it, despite of what they felt.

"My dear friends," said he, "you know there should be silence in the apartment of a dying man. For shame!—for shame! Cease this clamour; it will but distract him for whom you weep, and prevent him from composing his mind for the great trial that is before him."

"Sir," said Lanigan's wife, seizing his hand in both hers, and looking distractedly in his face, "are you a priest? For heaven's sake, tell us?"

"I am," he replied. "Leave the room every one of you. I hope your husband is not speechless?"

"Sweet Queen of Heaven, not yet, may her name be praised! but near it, your reverence—widin little or no time of it."

Whilst they spoke he was engaged in putting the stole about his neck, after which he cleared the room, and commenced hearing Lanigan's confession.

The appearance of a priest, and the consolation it produced, rallied the powers of life in the benevolent farmer. He became more collected; made a clear and satisfactory confession; received the sacrament of extreme unction; and felt himself able to speak with tolerable distinctness and precision. The effects of all this were astonishing. A placid serenity, full of hope and confidence, beamed from the pale and worn features of him who was but a few minutes before in a state of terror altogether indescribable. When his wife and family, after having been called in, observed this change, they immediately participated in his tranquillity. Death had been deprived of its sting, and grief of its bitterness; their sorrow was still deep, but it was not darkened by the dread of future misery. They felt for him as a beloved father, a kind husband, and a dear friend, who had lived a virtuous life, feared God, and was now about to pass into happiness.

When the rites of the Church were administered, and the family again assembled around the bed, the priest sat down in a position which enabled him to see the features of this good man more distinctly.

"I would be glad," said Lanigan, "to know who it is that God in his goodness has sent to smooth my bed in death, if it ud be plasins', sir, to you to tell me?"

"Do you remember," replied the priest, "a young lad whom you met some years ago on his way to Munster as a poor scholar? You and your family were particularly kind to him—so kind that he has never since forgotten your affectionate hospitality."

"We do, your reverence, we do. A mild, gentle crathur he was, poor boy. I hope God prospered him."

"You see him now before you," said the priest. "I am that boy, and I thank God that I can testify, however slightly, my deep sense of the virtues which you exercised towards me; although I regret that the occasion is one of such affliction."

The farmer raised his eyes and feeble hands towards heaven. "Praise an' glory to your name, good God!" he exclaimed. "Praise an' glory to your holy name! Now I know that I'm not forgotten, when you brought back the little kindness I did that boy for *your sake*, wid so many blessins' to me in the hour of my affliction an' sufferin'! Childhre, remember this, now that I'm goin' to lave yees for ever! Remimber always to help the stranger, an' thim that's poor an' in sorrow. If you do, God won't forget it to you; but will bring it back to yees when you stand in need of it, as he has done to me this day. You see,

childhre dear, how small trifles o' that kind depend on one another. If I hadn't thought of helpin' his reverence here when he was young an' away from his own, he wouldn't think of callin' upon us this day as he was passin'. You see the hand of God is in it, childhre; which it is, indeed, in everything that passes about us, if we could only see it as we ought to do. Thin, but I'd like to look upon your face, sir, if it's plasin' to you? A little more to the light, sir. There, I now see you. Ay, indeed, it's changed for the better, it is—the same mild, clear countenance, but not sorrowful, as when I seen it last. Suffer me to put my hand on your head, sir; I'd like to bless you before I die, for I can't forget what you undhertook to do for your paarents."

The priest sat near him; but finding that he was scarcely able to raise his hand to his head, he knelt down, and the farmer, before he communicated the blessing, inquired—

"Musha, sir, may I ax, wor you able to do anythink to help your family as you expected?"

"God," said the priest, "made me the instrument of raising them from their poverty; they are now comfortable and happy."

"Ay! Well I knew at the time, an' I said it, that a blessin' would attind your endayvours. An' now resave *my* blessin'. May you never depart from the right way! May the blessin' of God rest upon you for ever—Amin! Childhre, I'm gettin' wake; come near me, till—till I bless you, too, for the last time! They wor good childhre, sir—they were ever an' always good to me, an' to their poor mother, your reverence; an'—God forgive me if it's a sin!—but I feel a grate dale o' my heart an' my love fixed upon them. But sure, I'm their father, an' God, I hope, will look over it! Now, darlin's, afore I bless yees, I ax your forgiveness if ever I was harsher to yees than I ought!"

The children with a simultaneous movement encircled his bed, and could not reply for some minutes.

"Never, father darlin'! Oh, never did you offind us! Don't speak in that way, or you'll break our hearts; but forgive *us*, father asthore! Oh, forgive an' bless us, an' don't remimber against us our folly an' disobedience, for it's only now that we see we warn't towards you as we ought to be. Forgive us an' pardon us!"

He then made them all kneel around his bed, and, with solemn words and an impressive manner, placed his hand upon their heads, and blessed them with a virtuous father's last blessing.

He then called for his wife, and the scene became not only more touching, but more elevated. There was an exultation in

her manner, and an expression of vivid hope in her eye, arising from the fact of her husband having received, and been soothed by, the rites of her Church, that gave evident proof of the unparalleled attachment borne by persons of her class to the Catholic religion. The arrival of our hero had been so unexpected, and the terrors of the tender wife for her husband's soul so great, that the administration of the sacrament almost superseded from her heart every other sensation than that of devotional triumph. Even now, in the midst of her tears, that triumph kindled in her eye, with a light that shone in melancholy beauty upon the bed of death. In proportion, however, as the parting scene—which was to be their *last*—began to work with greater power upon her sorrow, so did this expression gradually fade away. Grief for his loss resumed its dominion over her heart so strongly that their last parting was afflicting even to look upon.

When it was over, Lanigan once more addressed the priest.

"Now, sir," he observed, but with great difficulty, "let me have *your* blessin' an' your prayers; an' along wid that, your reverence, if you remimber a request I once made to you——"

"I remember it well," replied the priest; "you allude to the masses which you wished me to say for you, should I ever receive Orders. Make your mind easy on that point. I not only *shall* offer up mass for the repose of your soul, but I can assure you that I *have* mentioned you by name in every mass which I celebrated since my ordination."

He then proceeded to direct the mind of his dying benefactor to such subjects as were best calculated to comfort and strengthen him.

About daybreak the next morning this man of many virtues, after struggling rather severely for two hours preceding his death, passed into eternity, there to enjoy the recompense of a well-spent life.

When he was dead, the priest, who never left him during the night, approached the bed, and after surveying his benevolent features, now composed in the stillness of death, exclaimed—

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them!"

Having uttered these words aloud, he sat down beside the bed, buried his face in his handkerchief, and wept.

He was now only a short day's journey from home, and as his presence, he knew, would be rather a restraint upon a family so much in affliction, he bade them farewell, and proceeded on his way. He travelled slowly, and as every

well-known hill or lake appeared to him, his heart beat quickly, his memory gave up its early stores, and his affections prepared themselves for the trial that was before them.

"It is better for me not to arrive," thought he, "until the family shall have returned from their daily labour, and are collected about the hearth."

In the meantime many an impression of profound and fervid piety came over him, when he reflected upon the incontrovertible proofs of providential protection and interference which had been, during his absence from home, under his struggles, and in his good fortune, so clearly laid before him. "Deep," he exclaimed, "is the gratitude I owe to God for this; may I never forget to acknowledge it!"

It was now about seven o'clock; the evening was calm, and the sun shone with that clear amber light which gives warmth and the power of exciting tenderness to natural scenery. He had already gained the ascent which commanded a view of the rich sweep of country that reposed below. There it lay—his native home—his native parish—bathed in the light and glory of the hour. Its fields were green—its rivers shining like loosened silver—its meadows already studded with haycocks, its green pastures covered with sheep, and its unruffled lakes reflecting the hills under which they lay. Here and there a gentleman's residence rose among the distant trees, and well did he recognise the church spire that cut into the western sky on his right. It is true, nothing of the grandeur and magnificence of nature was there; everything was simple in its beauty. The quiet charm, the serene light, the air of happiness and peace that reposed upon all he saw, stirred up a thousand tender feelings in a heart whose gentle character resembled that of the prospect which it felt so exquisitely. The smoke of a few farm-houses and cottages rose in blue, graceful columns to the air, giving just that appearance of life which was necessary; and a figure or two, with lengthened shadows, moved across the fields and meadows a little below where he stood.

But our readers need not to be told that there was one spot which, beyond all others, riveted his attention. On that spot his eager eye rested long and intensely. The spell of its remembrance had clung to his early heart; he had never seen it in his dreams without weeping; and often had the agitation of his imaginary sorrow awoke him with his eyelashes steeped in tears. He looked down on it steadily. At length he was moved with a strong sensation like grief; he sobbed twice

or thrice, and the tears rolled in showers from his eyes. His gathering affections were relieved by this; he felt lighter, and in the same slow manner rode onward to his father's house.

To this there were two modes of access: one by a paved bridleway, or *boreen*, that ran up directly before the door; the other by a green lane, that diverged from the *boreen* about a furlong below the house. He took the latter, certain that the family could not notice his approach, nor hear the noise of his horse's footsteps, until he could arrive at the very threshold. On dismounting, he felt that he could scarcely walk. He approached the door, however, as steadily as he could. He entered—and the family, who had just finished their supper, rose up, as a mark of their respect to the stranger.

"Is this," he inquired, "the house in which Dominick M'Evoy lives?"

"That's my name, sir," replied Dominick.

"The family, I trust, are—all—well? I have been desired—but no—no—I cannot—I cannot!—FATHER!—MOTHER!"

"It's *him*!" shrieked the mother—"it's himself!—Jimmy!"

"Jimmy!—Jimmy!" shouted the father, with a cry of joy which might be heard far beyond the house.

"Jimmy!—our poor Jimmy!" exclaimed his brothers and sisters.

"Asy, childhre," said the father—"asy; let the mother to him—let *her* to him. Who has the right that *she* has? Vara, asthore—Vara, think of yourself. God of heaven! what is comin' over her?—Her brain's turned!"

"Father, don't remove her," said the son. "Leave her arms where they are; it's long since they encircled my neck before. Often—often would I have given the wealth of the universe to be encircled in my blessed and beloved mother's arms! Yes, yes!—Weep, my father—weep, each of you. You see those tears: consider them as a proof that I have never forgotten you! Beloved mother! recollect yourself; she knows me not—her eyes wander!—I fear the shock has been too much for her. Place a chair at the door, and I will bring her to the air."

After considerable effort the mother's faculties were restored so far as to be merely conscious that our hero was her son. She had not yet shed a tear, but now she surveyed his countenance, smiled and named him, placed her hands upon him, and examined his dress with a singular blending of conflicting emotions, but still without being thoroughly collected.

"I will speak to her," said Jemmy, "in Irish; it will go directly to her heart. *Mhair, avourneen, tha ma, laht, anish!*—Mother, my darling, I am with you at last."

"*Shamus, aroon, avick ma chree, wuill thu lhum? wuill thu—wuill thu lhum?*—Jemmy, my beloved, son of my heart, are you with me?—are you—are you with me?"

"*Ish maheen a tha in, a vair dheelish machree.*—It is *I* who am with you, beloved mother of my heart!"

She smiled again, but only for a moment. She looked at him, laid his head upon her bosom, bedewed his face with her tears, and muttered out, in a kind of sweet, musical cadence, the Irish cry of joy.

We are incapable of describing this scene further. Our readers must be contented to know that the delight and happiness of our hero's whole family were complete. Their son, after many years of toil and struggle, had at length succeeded, by a virtuous course of action, in raising them from poverty to comfort, and in effecting his own object, which was to become a member of the Catholic priesthood. During all his trials he never failed to rely on God; and it is seldom that those who rely upon Him, when striving to attain a laudable purpose, are ever ultimately disappointed.

We regret to inform our readers that the poor scholar is dead! He did not, in fact, long survive the accomplishment of his wishes. But as we had the particulars of his story from his nearest friends, we thought his virtues of too exalted a nature to pass into oblivion without some record, however humble. He died as he had lived—the friend of God and of man.

TUBBER DERG; OR, THE RED WELL.

THE following story owes nothing to any colouring or invention of mine; it is unhappily a true one, and to me possesses a peculiar and melancholy interest, arising from my intimate knowledge of the man whose fate it holds up as a moral lesson to Irish landlords. I knew him well, and many a day and hour have I played about his knee, and ran, in my boyhood, round his path, when, as he said himself, the world was no trouble to him.

On the south side of a sloping tract of light ground, lively, warm, and productive, stood a white, moderate-sized farm-house, which, in consequence of its conspicuous situation, was a prominent and, we may add, a graceful object in the landscape of which it formed a part. The spot whereon it stood was a swelling natural terrace, the soil of which was heavier and richer than that of the adjoining lands. On each side of the house stood a clump of old beeches, the only survivors of that species then remaining in the country. These beeches extended behind the house in a kind of angle, with opening enough at their termination to form a vista, through which its white walls glistened with beautiful effect in the calm splendour of a summer evening. Above the mound on which it stood rose two steep hills, overgrown with furze and fern, except on their tops, which were clothed with purple heath; they were also covered with patches of broom, and studded with grey rocks, which sometimes rose singly or in larger masses, pointed or rounded into curious and fantastic shapes. Exactly between these hills the sun went down during the month of June, and nothing could be in finer relief than the rocky and picturesque outlines of their sides, as, crowned with thorns and clumps of wild ash, they appeared to overhang the valley, whose green foliage was gilded by the sunbeams, which lit up the scene into radiant beauty. The bottom of this natural chasm, which opened against the deep crimson of the evening sky, was nearly upon a level with the house, and completely so with the beeches that surrounded it. Brightly did the sinking sun fall upon their

tops, whilst the neat white house below, in their quiet shadow, sent up its wreath of smoke among their branches, itself an emblem of contentment, industry, and innocence. It was, in fact, a lovely situation; perhaps the brighter to me that its remembrance is associated with days of happiness and freedom from the cares of a world which, like a distant mountain, darkens as we approach it, and only exhausts us in struggling to climb its rugged and barren paths.

There was to the south-west of this house another little hazel glen, that ended in a precipice formed by a single rock some thirty feet high, over which tumbled a crystal cascade into a basin worn in its hard bed below. From this basin the stream murmured away through the copse-wood, until it joined a larger rivulet that passed, with many a winding, through a fine extent of meadows adjoining it. Across the foot of this glen, and past the door of the house we have described, ran a bridle-road, from time immemorial, on which, as the traveller ascended it towards the house, he appeared to track his way in blood; for a chalybeate *spa* arose at its head, oozing out of the earth, and spread itself in a crimson stream over the path in every spot whereon a footmark could be made. From this circumstance it was called Tubber Derg, or the Red Well. In the meadow where the glen terminated was another spring of delicious crystal; and clearly do I remember the ever-beaten pathway that led to it through the grass, and up the green field which rose in a gentle slope to the happy-looking house of Owen M'Carthy, for so was the man called who resided under its peaceful roof.

I will not crave your pardon, gentle reader, for dwelling at such length upon a scene so dear to my heart as this, because I write not now so much for your gratification as my own. Many an eve of gentle May have I pulled the Maygowans which grew about that well and over that smooth meadow. Often have I raised my voice to its shrillest pitch that I might hear its echoes rebounding in the bottom of the green and still glen, where silence, so to speak, was deepened by the continuous murmur of the cascade above; and when the cuckoo uttered her first note from among the hawthorns on its side, with what trembling anxiety did I, an urchin of some eight or nine years, look under my right foot for the white hair, whose charm was such that, by keeping it about me, the first female name I should hear was destined, I believed in my soul, to be that of my future wife. Sweet was the song of the thrush, and mellow the whistle of the blackbird,

as they rose in the stillness of evening over the "birken shaws" and green dells of this secluded spot of rural beauty. Far, too, could the rich voice of Owen M'Carthy be heard along the hills and meadows, as, with a little chubby urchin at his knee and another in his arms, he sat on a bench beside his own door, singing the "Trougha" in his native Irish; whilst Kathleen his wife, with her two maids, each crooning a low song, sat before the door milking the cows, whose sweet breath mingled its perfume with the warm breeze of evening.

Owen M'Carthy was descended from a long line of honest ancestors, whose names had never, within the memory of man, been tarnished by the commission of a mean or disreputable action. They were always a kind-hearted family, but stern and proud in the common intercourse of life. They believed themselves to be, and probably were, a branch of the MacCarthy-More stock; and although only the possessors of a small farm, it was singular to observe the effect which this conviction produced upon their bearing and manners. To it might, perhaps, be attributed the high and stoical integrity for which they were remarkable. This severity, however, was no proof that they wanted feeling, or were insensible to the misery and sorrows of others: in all the little cares and perplexities which chequered the peaceful neighbourhood in which they lived they were ever the first to console, or, if necessary, to support a distressed neighbour with the means which God had placed in their possession; for, being industrious, they were seldom poor. Their words were few but sincere, and generally promised less than the honest hearts that dictated them intended to perform. There is in some persons an hereditary feeling of just principle, the result neither of education nor of a clear moral sense, but rather a kind of instinctive honesty, which descends, like a constitutional bias, from father to son, pervading every member of the family. It is difficult to define this, or to assign its due position in the scale of human virtues. It exists in the midst of the grossest ignorance, and influences the character in the absence of better principles. Such was the impress which marked so strongly the family of which I speak. No one would ever think of imputing a dishonest act to the M'Carthys; nor would any person acquainted with them hesitate for a moment to consider their word as good as the bond of another. I do not mean to say, however, that their motives of action were not higher than this instinctive honesty; far from it: but

I say that they possessed it *in addition* to a strong feeling of family pride and a correct knowledge of their moral duties.

I can only take up Owen M'Carthy at that part of the past to which my memory extends. He was then a tall, fine-looking young man ; silent, but kind. One of the earliest events within my recollection is his wedding ; after that the glimpses of his state and circumstances are imperfect ; but as I grew up they became more connected, and I am able to remember him the father of four children ; an industrious, inoffensive small farmer, beloved, respected, and honoured. No man could rise, be it ever so early, who would not find Owen up before him ; no man could anticipate him in an early crop ; and if a widow or a sick acquaintance were unable to get in their harvest, Owen was certain to collect the neighbours to assist them, to be the first there himself, with quiet benevolence, encouraging them to a zealous performance of the friendly task in which they were engaged.

It was, I believe, soon after his marriage that the lease of the farm held by him expired. Until that time he had been able to live with perfect independence ; but even the enormous rise of one pound per acre, though it deprived him in a great degree of his usual comforts, did not sink him below the bare necessities of life. For some years after that he could still serve a deserving neighbour ; and never was the hand of Owen M'Carthy held back from the wants and distresses of those whom he knew to be honest.

I remember once an occasion upon which a widow Murray applied to him for a loan of five pounds to prevent her two cows from being auctioned for half a year's rent, of which she only wanted that sum. Owen sat at dinner with his family when she entered the house in tears, and, as well as her agitation of mind permitted, gave him a detailed account of her embarrassment.

"The blessin' o' God be upon all here," said she, on entering.

"The double o' that to you, Rosha," replied Owen's wife ; "won't you sit in an' be atin' ? Here's a sate beside Nanny ; come over, Rosha."

Owen only nodded to her, and continued to eat his dinner, as if he felt no interest in her distress. Rosha sat down at a distance, and, with the corner of a red handkerchief to her eyes, shed tears in that bitterness of feeling which marks the helplessness of honest industry under the pressure of calamity

"In the name o' goodness, Rosha," said Mrs. M'Carthy, "what ails you, asthore? Sure Jimmy—God spare him to you—wouldn't be dead?"

"Glory be to God! no, avourneen machree. Och, och! but it ud be the black sight, an' the black day, that ud see my brave boy, the staff of our support, an' the bread of our mouth, taken away from us. No, no, Kathleen, dear, it's not that bad wid me yet. I hope we'll never live to see his manly head laid down before us. 'Twas his own manliness, indeed, brought it an him—backin' the sack when he was bringin' home our last *meldhre* from the mill; for, you see, he should do it, the crathur, to show his strinth, an' the sack when he got in an was too heavy for him, an' hurted the small of his back—for his bones, you see, are too young, an' hadn't time to fill up yet. No, avourneen. Glory be to God! he's gettin' betther wid me!" and the poor creature's eyes glistened with delight through her tears and the darkness of her affliction.

Without saying a word, Owen, when she had finished the eulogium on her son, rose, and taking her forcibly by the shoulder, set her down at the table, on which a large pot full of potatoes had been spread out, with a circle in the middle for a dish of rashers and eggs, into which dish every right hand of those about it was thrust, with a quickness that clearly illustrated the principle of competition as a stimulus to action.

"Spare your breath," said Owen, placing her rather roughly upon the seat, "an' take share of what's goin'; when all's cleared off we'll hear you, but the sorra word till then."

"Musha, Owen," said the poor woman, "you're the same man still; sure we all know your ways; I'll strive, avourneen, to ate—I'll strive, asthore—to plase you, an' the Lord bless you an' yours, an' may you never be as I an' my fatherless childhre are this sorrowful day!"—and she accompanied her words by a flood of tears.

Owen, without evincing the slightest sympathy, withdrew himself from the table. Not a muscle of his face was moved; but as the cat came about his feet at the time, he put his foot under her, and flung her as easily as possible to the lower end of the kitchen.

"Arrah, what harm did the crathur do," asked his wife, "that you'd kick her for that way? an' why but you *ate out* your dinner?"

"I'm done," he replied, rather gruffly, "but that's no rason that Rosha, an' you, an' thim boys that has the work afore them shouldn't finish your male's mate."

Poor Rosha thought that by his withdrawing he had already suspected the object of her visit, and of course concluded that her chance of succeeding was very slender.

The wife, who guessed what she wanted, as well as the nature of her suspicion, being herself as affectionate and obliging as Owen, reverted to the subject in order to give her an opportunity of proceeding.

"Somethin' bitther 'an' out o' the common coorse is a throuble to you, Rosha," said she, "or you wouldn't be in the state you're in. The Lord look down on you this day, you poor crathur—widout the father of your childhre to stand up for you, an' your only other dependence laid on the broad of his back, all as one as a cripple; but no matther, Rosha; trust to Him that can be a husband to you, an' a father to your orphans—trust to Him, an' his blessed mother in heaven, this day, an' never fear but they'll *rise* up a frind for you. Musha, Owen, ate your dinner as you ought to do, wid your capers! How can you take a spade in your hand upon that morsel?"

"Finish your own," said her husband, "an' never heed me; jist let me alone. Don't you see that if I wanted it I'd ate it, an' what more would you have about it?"

"Well, acushla, it's your own loss, sure, of a sartinty. An', Rosha, whisper, ahagur—what can Owen or I do for you? Throth, it would be a bad day we'd see you at a *deshort* for a frind, for you never wor nothin' else nor a civil, oblagin' neighbour yourself; an' him that's gone before—the Lord make his bed in heaven this day—was as good a warrant as ever broke bread to sarve a frind, if it was at the hour of midnight."

"Ah! when I had *him*," exclaimed the distracted widow, "I never had occasion to trouble aither frind or neighbour; but he's gone, an' now it's otherwise wid me—glory be to God for all his mercies—a wurrah dheelish! Why, thin, since I must spake, an' has no other frind to go to—but somehow I doubt Owen looks dark upon me—sure I'd put my hand to a stamp, if my word wouldn't do for it, an' sign the blessed crass that saved us, for the payment of it; or I'd give it to him in oats, for I hear you want some, Owen—phatie oats it is, and a betther shouldhered or fuller-lookin' grain never went undher a harrow—indeed, it's it that's the beauty, all out, if it's good seed you want."

"What is it for, woman alive?" inquired Owen, as he kicked a three-legged stool out of his way.

"What is it for, is it? Och, Owen, darlin', sure my two brave cows is lavin' me. Paddy Dannellan, the driver, is over wid me

beyant, an' has them ready to set off wid. I reared them both, the two of them, wid my own hands; *Cheehoney*, that knows my voice, an' would come to me from the fardest corner o' the field, is goin', and nothin' will we have—nothin' will my poor sick boy have—but the black wather, or the dhry salt; besides the butther of them bein' lost to us for the rent, or a small taste of it, of an odd time, for poor Jimmy. Owen, next to God, I have no frind to depind upon but yourself!"

"Me!" said Owen, as if astonished. "Phoo, that's quare enough! Now do you think, Rosha—hut, hut, woman alive! Come, boys, you're all done; out wid yees to your spades, an' finish that *meerin* before night. Me!—hut, hut!"

"I have it all but five pounds, Owen, an' for the sake of him that's in his grave—an' that maybe is able to put up his prayer for you——"

"An' what would you want *me* to do, Rosha? Fittier for you to sit down an' finish your dinner, when it's before you. I'm goin' to get an ould glove¹ that's somewhere about this chist, for I must weed out that bit of oats before night, wid a blessin';" and as he spoke he passed into another room, as if he had altogether forgotten her solicitation, and in a few minutes returned.

"Owen, avick!—an' the blessin' of the fatherless be upon you, sure an' many a one o' them you have, anyhow, Owen!"

"Well, Rosha, well?"

"Och, och, Owen, it's low days wid me to be depindin' upon the stranger! Little thim that reared me ever thought it ud come to this. You know I'm a dacent father's child, an' I have stooped to you, Owen M'Carthy—what I'd scorn to do to any other but yourself—poor an' frindless as I stand here before you. Let thim take the cows, thin, from my childhre, but the father of the fatherless will support thim an' me. Och, but it's well for the O'Donohoes that their landlord lives at home among themselves, for, may the heavens look down on me, I wouldn't know where to find mine, if one sight of him ud save me an' my childhre from the grave! The agent, even he lives in Dublin; an' how could I lave my sick boy an' small *girshas* by themselves to go a hundre' miles, an' maybe not see him aither all? Little hopes I'd have from him even if I did. He's paid for gatherin' in his rents; but it's well known he wants the touch of nathur for the sufferin's of the poor, an' of them that's honest in their intintions."

¹ In "hand-weeding," old gloves are used to prevent the hands from being injured by the thistles.

"I'll go over wid you, Rosh, if that will be of any use," replied Owen, composedly. "Come, I'll go an' spake to dirty Dannellan."

"The sorra blame I blame him, Owen," replied Rosh. "His bread's depindin' upon the likes of sich doin's, an' he can't get over it; but a word from you, Owen, will save me, for who ever refused to take the word of a M'Carthy?"

When Owen and the widow arrived at the house of the latter they found the situation of the bailiff laughable in the extreme. Her eldest son, who had been confined to his bed by a hurt received in his back, was up, and had got the unfortunate driver, who was rather old, wedged in between the dresser and the wall, where his cracked voice—for he was asthmatic—was raised to the highest pitch, calling for assistance. Beside him was a large tub half filled with water, into which the little ones were emptying small jugs, carried at the top of their speed from a puddle before the door. In the meantime Jemmy was tugging at the bailiff with all his strength—fortunately for that personage it was but little—with the most sincere intention of inverting him into the tub, which contained as much muddy water as would have been sufficient to make him a subject for the deliberation of a coroner and twelve honest men. Nothing could be more conscientiously attempted than the task which Jemmy had proposed to execute; every tug brought out his utmost strength, and when he failed in pulling down the bailiff, he compensated himself for his want of success by cuffing his ribs and peeling his shins by hard kicks; whilst from those open points which the driver's grapple with his man naturally exposed were inflicted on him by the rejoicing urchins numberless punches of tongs, potato-washers, and sticks whose points were from time to time hastily thrust into the coals, that they might more effectually either blind or disable him in some other manner.

As one of the little ones ran out to fill his jug he spied his mother and Owen approaching, on which, with the empty vessel in his hand, he flew towards them, his little features distorted by glee and ferocity wildly mixed up together.

"Oh, mudher, mudher—ha, ha, ha!—don't come in yet; don't come in, Owen, till Jimmy, an' huz, an' the Denises, gets the bailey drowned. We'll soon have the *bol*¹ full; but Paddy an' Jack Denis have the eyes a'most pucked out of him; an'

¹ A tub.

Katty's takin' the hook from behind the *cuppel* to get it about his neck."

Owen and the widow entered with all haste, precisely at the moment when Dannellan's head was dipped for the first time into the vessel.

"Is it goin' to murdher him yees are?" said Owen, as he seized Jemmy with a grasp that transferred him to the opposite end of the house. "Hould back, ye pack of young divils, an' let the man up. What did he come to do but his duty? I tell you, Jimmy, if you wor *at* yourself, an' in full strinth, that you'd have the man's blood on you where you stand, and would suffer as you ought to do for it."

"There, let me," replied the lad, his eyes glowing and his veins swollen with passion; "I don't care if I did. It would be no sin, an' no disgrace, to hang for the like of him; dacenter to do that than stale a creel of turf, or a wisp of straw, 'tanny rate."

In the meantime the bailiff had raised his head out of the water, and presented a visage which it was impossible to view with gravity. The widow's anxiety prevented her from seeing it in a ludicrous light; but Owen's severe face assumed a grave smile as the man shook himself and attempted to comprehend the nature of his situation. The young urchins, who had fallen back at the appearance of Owen and the widow, now burst into a peal of mirth, in which, however, Jemmy, whose fiercer passions had been roused, did not join.

"Paddy Dannellan," said the widow, "I take the mother of heaven to witness that it vexes my heart to see you get sich thratement in my place; an' I wouldn't for the best cow in my byre that sich a *brieuliagh* happened. *Dher charp agus manim*,¹ Jimmy, but I'll make you suffer for drawin' down this upon my head, an' me had enough over it afore."

"I don't care," replied Jemmy; "whoever comes to take our property from us, an' us willin' to work, will suffer for it. Do you think I'd see thim crathurs at their dhry phatie, an' our cows standin' in a pound for no rason? No; high hangin' to me, but I'll split to the skull the first man that takes them; an' all I'm sorry for is that it's not the vagabone landlord himself that's near me. That's our thanks for payin' many a good pound in honesty an' dacency to him an' his; lavin' us to a schamin' agent, an' not even to that same, but to his undher-strappers, that's robbin' us on both sides between them. May hard fortune

¹ By my soul and body.

attend him for a landlord! You may tell him this, Dannellan—that his wisest plan is to keep clear of the counthry. Sure it's a gambler he is, they say, an' we must be harrished an' racked to support his villainy. But wait a bit; maybe there's a good time comin', when we'll pay our money to him that won't be too proud to hear our complaints wid their own ears, an' who won't turn us over to a devil's limb of an agent. *He* had need, anyhow, to get his coffin sooner nor he thinks. What signifies hangin' in a good cause?" said he, as the tears of keen indignation burst from his glowing eyes. "It's a dacent death, an' a happy death, when it's for the right," he added—for his mind was evidently fixed upon the contemplation of those means of redress which the habits of the country and the prejudices of the people present to them in the first moments of passion.

"It's well that Dannellan's one of ourselves," replied Owen coolly, "otherwise, Jimmy, you said words that would lay you up by the heels. As for you, Dannellan, you must look over this. The boy's the son of dacent poor parents, an' it's a new thing for him to see the cows druv from the place. The poor fellow's vexed, too, that he has been so long laid up wid a sore back; an' so, you see, one thing or another has put him through other. Jimmy is warm-hearted afther all, an' will be sorry for it when he cools, an' reminds that *you* wor only doin' your duty."

"But what am I to do about the cows? Sure I can't go back widout either thim or the rint!" said Paddy, with a look of fear and trembling at Jemmy.

"The cows!" said another of the widow's sons, who then came in; "why, you dirty spalpeen of a rip, you may whistle on the wrong side o' your mouth for them. I *druv* them off of the estate; an' now take them, if you dar; it's conthrairy to law," said the urchin, "an' if you'd touch them, I'd make my mudher sarve you wid a *lattitat* or a *fiery-flashes*."

This was a triumph to the youngsters, who began to shake their little fists at him, and to exclaim in a chorus, "Ha, you dirty rip! wait till we get you out o' the house, an' if we don't put you from ever drivin'! Why but you work like another?—ha, you'll get it!"—and every little fist was shook in vengeance at him.

"Whisht wid yees," said Jemmy to the little ones. "Let him alone; he got enough. There's the cows for you; an' keen may the curse o' the widow an' orphans light upon you, an' upon them that sent you, from first to last!—an' that's the *best* we wish you!"

"Paddy," said Owen to the bailiff, "is there any one in the town below that will take the rint, an' give a resate for it? Do you think, man, that the neighbours of an honest, industrious woman ud see the cattle taken out of her byre for a thrifle? Hut, tut! no, man alive—no sich thing! There's not a man in the parish, wid manes to do it, would see them taken away to be canted at only about a fourth part of their value. Hut, tut—no!"

As the sterling fellow spoke the cheeks of the widow were suffused with tears, and her son Jemmy's hollow eyes once more kindled, but with a far different expression from that which but a few minutes before flashed from them.

"Owen," said he, and utterance nearly failed him—"Owen, if *I* was well, it wouldn't be as it is wid us; but—no, indeed, it would not; but—may God bless you for this! Owen, never fear but you'll be paid; may God bless you, Owen!"

As he spoke the hand of his humble benefactor was warmly grasped in his. A tear fell upon it; for, with one of those quick and fervid transitions of feeling so peculiar to the people, he now felt a strong, generous emotion of gratitude, mingled perhaps with a sense of wounded pride on finding the poverty of their little family so openly exposed.

"Hut, tut, Jimmy, avick," said Owen, who understood his feelings; "phoo, man alive! hut—hem! Why, sure it's nothin' at all, at all; anybody would do it—only a bare five-an'-twenty shillin's—[it was five pounds]—any neighbour—Mick Cassidy, Jack Moran, or Pether M'Cullagh—would do it. Come, Paddy, step out; the money's to the fore. Rosha, put your cloak about you, and let us go down to the agint or clerk, or whatsoever he is—sure that makes no maxim anyhow—I suppose he has power to give a resate. Jimmy, go to bed again—you're pale, poor bouchal; and childhre, ye crathurs, ye, the cows won't be taken from yees this bout. Come, in the name of God, let us go and see everything rightified at once—hut, tut—come."

Many similar details of Owen M'Carthy's useful life could be given, in which he bore an equally benevolent and Christian part. Poor fellow! he was ere long brought low; but to the credit of our peasantry, much as is said about their barbarity, he was treated, when helpless, with gratitude, pity, and kindness.

Until the peace of 1814 Owen's regular and systematic industry enabled him to struggle successfully against a weighty rent and sudden depression in the price of agricultural produce; that is, he was able, by the unremitting toil of a man remarkable alike for an unbending spirit and a vigorous frame of body, to pay

his rent with tolerable regularity. It is true a change began to be visible in his personal appearance, in his farm, in the dress of his children, and in the economy of his household. Improvements, which adequate capital would have enabled him to effect, were left either altogether unattempted, or in an imperfect state resembling neglect, though in reality the result of poverty. His dress at mass, and in fairs and markets, had by degrees lost that air of comfort and warmth which bespeaks the independent farmer. The evidences of embarrassment began to disclose themselves in many small points, inconsiderable it is true, but not the less significant. His house, in the progress of his declining circumstances, ceased to be annually ornamented by a new coat of whitewash; it soon assumed a faded and yellowish hue, and sparkled not in the setting sun as in the days of Owen's prosperity. It had, in fact, a wasted, unthriving look, like its master; the thatch became black and rotten upon its roof, the chimneys sloped to opposite points, the windows were less neat, and ultimately, when broken, were patched with a couple of leaves from the children's blotted copy-books. His outhouses also began to fail; the neatness of his little farmyard, and the cleanliness which marked so conspicuously the space fronting his dwelling-house, disappeared in the course of time. Filth began to accumulate where no filth had been; his garden was not now planted so early, nor with such taste and neatness as before; his crops were later and less abundant; his haggards neither so full nor so trim as they were wont to be, nor his ditches and enclosures kept in such good repair. His cars, ploughs, and other farming implements, instead of being put under cover, were left exposed to the influence of wind and weather, where they soon became crazy and useless.

Such, however, were only the slighter symptoms of his bootless struggle against the general embarrassment into which the agricultural interests were, year after year, so unhappily sinking.

Had the tendency to general distress among the class to which he belonged become stationary, Owen would have continued by toil and incessant exertion to maintain his ground; but, unfortunately, there was no point at which the national depression could then stop. Year after year produced deeper, more extensive, and more complicated misery; and when he hoped that every succeeding season would bring an improvement in the market, he was destined to experience not merely a fresh disappointment, but an unexpected depreciation in the price of his corn, butter, and other disposable commodities.

When a nation is reduced to such a state, no eye but that of God himself can see the appalling wretchedness to which a year of disease and scarcity strikes down the poor and working classes.

Owen, after a long and noble contest for nearly three years, sank at length under the united calamities of disease and scarcity. The father of the family was laid low upon the bed of sickness, and those of his little ones who escaped it were almost consumed by famine. This twofold shock sealed his ruin; his honest heart was crushed—his hardy frame shorn of its strength, and he, to whom every neighbour fled as to a friend, now required friendship at a moment when the wide-spread poverty of the country rendered its assistance hopeless.

On rising from his bed of sickness the prospect before him required his utmost fortitude to bear. He was now wasted in energy both of mind and body, reduced to utter poverty, with a large family of children too young to assist him, without means of retrieving his circumstances, his wife and himself gaunt skeletons, his farm neglected, his house wrecked, and his offices falling to ruin, yet every day bringing the half-year's term nearer! Oh, ye who riot on the miseries of such men—ye who roll round the easy circle of fashionable life—think upon this picture! Ye vile and heartless landlords, who see not, hear not, know not those to whose heart-breaking toil ye owe the only merit ye possess—that of rank in society—come and contemplate this virtuous man, as unfriended, unassisted, and uncheered by those who are bound by a strong moral duty to protect and aid him, he looks shuddering into the dark, cheerless future! Is it to be wondered at that he, and such as he, should, in the misery of his despair, join the nightly meetings, be lured to associate himself with the incendiary, or seduced to grasp, in the stupid apathy of wretchedness, the weapon of the murderer? By neglecting the people, by draining them with merciless rapacity of the means of life, by goading them on under a cruel system of rack rents, ye become not their natural benefactors, but curses and scourges, nearly as much in reality as ye are in their opinion.

When Owen rose he was driven by hunger, direct and immediate, to sell his best cow; and having purchased some oatmeal, at an enormous price, from a well-known devotee in the parish, who hoarded up this commodity for a “dear summer,” he laid his plans for the future with as much judgment as any man could display. One morning after breakfast he addressed his wife as follows:—

"Kathleen, mavourneen, I want to consult wid you about what we ought to do; things are low wid us, asthore; and except our heavenly Father puts it into the heart of them I'm goin' to mention, I don't know what we'll do, nor what'll become of these poor crathurs that's naked and hungry about us. God pity them, they don't know—and maybe that same's some comfort—the hardships that's before them. Poor crathurs, see how quiet and sorrowful they sit about their little play, passin' the time for themselves as well as they can! Alley, acushla machree, come over to me. Your hair is bright and fair, Alley, and curls so purlily that the finest lady in the land might envy it, but, acushla, your colour's gone, your little hands are wasted away too; that sickness was hard and sore upon you, *a colleen machree*, and he that ud spend his heart's blood for you, darlin', can do nothin' to help you!"

He looked at the child as he spoke, and a slight motion in the muscles of his face was barely perceptible, but it passed away; and, after kissing her, he proceeded:—

"Ay, ye crathurs—you and I, Kathleen, could earn our bread for ourselves yet, but these can't do it. This last stroke, darlin', has laid us at the door of both poverty and sickness, but, blessed be the mother of heaven for it, they are all left wid us; and sure that's a blessin' we've to be thankful for—glory be to God!"

"Ay, poor things, it's well to have them spared, Owen, dear; sure I'd rather a thousand times beg from door to door, and have my childhre to look at, than be in comfort widout them."

"Beg—that ud go hard wid me, Kathleen. I'd work—I'd live on next to nothing all the year round—but to see the crathurs that wor dacently bred up brought to that—I couldn't bear it, Kathleen—'twould break the heart widin me. Poor as they are, they have the blood of kings in their veins; and besides, to see a M'Carthy beggin' his bread in the counthry where his name was once great. The M'Carthy More, that was their title. No, acushla; I love them as I do the blood in my own veins; but I'd rather see them in the arms of God in heaven, laid down dacently, with their little sorrowful faces washed, and their little bodies stretched out purlily before my eyes—I would—in the graveyard there beyant, where all belongin' to me lie, than have it cast up to them, or have it said that ever a M'Carthy was seen beggin' on the highway."

"But, Owen, can you strike out no plan for us that ud put us in the way of comin' round agin? These poor ones, if we could hould out for two or three year, would soon be able to help us."

"They would—they would. I'm thinkin' this day or two of a plan, but I'm doubtful whether it ud come to anything."

"What is it, acushla? Sure we can't be worse nor we are, anyway."

"I'm goin' to go to Dublin. I'm tould that the landlord's come home from France, and that he's there now; and if I didn't see him, sure I could see the agent. Now, Kathleen, my intintion ud be to lay our case before the head landlord himself, in hopes he might hould back his hand, and spare us for a while. If I had a line from the agent, or a scrape of a pen that I could show at home to some of the nabours, who knows but I could borry what ud set us up agin! I think many of them ud be sorry to see me turned out; eh, Kathleen?"

The Irish are an imaginative people; indeed, too much so for either their individual or national happiness. And it is this and superstition, which also depends much upon imagination, that makes them so easily influenced by those extravagant dreams that are held out to them by persons who understand their character.

When Kathleen heard the plan on which Owen founded his expectations of assistance, her dark, melancholy eye flashed with a portion of its former fire; a transient vivacity lit up her sickly features, and she turned a smile of hope and affection upon her children, then upon Owen.

"Arrah, thin, who knows, indeed!—who knows but he might do something for us! And maybe we might be as well as ever yet! May the Lord put it into his heart this day! I declare, ay!—maybe it was God put it into *your* heart, Owen!"

"I'll set off," replied her husband, who was a man of decision — "I'll set off on other morrow mornin'; and as nobody knows anything about it, so let there not be a word said upon the subject, good or bad. If I have success, well and good; but if not, why nobody need be the wiser."

The heart-broken wife evinced, for the remainder of the day, a lightness of spirits which she had not felt for many a month before. Even Owen was less depressed than usual, and employed himself in making such arrangements as he knew would occasion his family to feel the inconvenience of his absence less acutely. But as the hour of his departure drew nigh a sorrowful feeling of affection, rising into greater strength and tenderness, threw a melancholy gloom around his hearth. According to their simple view of distance, a journey to Dublin was a serious undertaking, and to them it was such. Owen was in weak health, just risen out of illness, and what was

more trying than any other consideration was that since their marriage they had never been separated before.

On the morning of his departure he was up before daybreak, and so were his wife and children, for the latter had heard the conversation already detailed between them, and, with their simple-minded parents, enjoyed the gleam of hope which it presented; but this soon changed—when he was preparing to go an indefinite sense of fear, and a more vivid clinging of affection, marked their feelings. He himself partook of this, and was silent, depressed, and less ardent than when the speculation first presented itself to his mind. His resolution, however, was taken, and should he fail, no blame at a future time could be attached to himself. It was the last effort; and to neglect it, he thought, would have been to neglect his duty. When breakfast was ready they all sat down in silence; the hour was yet early, and a rushlight was placed in a wooden candlestick that stood beside them to afford light. There was something solemn and touching in the group as they sat in dim relief, every face marked by the traces of sickness, want, sorrow, and affection. The father attempted to eat, but he could not; Kathleen sat at the meal, but could taste nothing; the children ate, for hunger at the moment was predominant over every other sensation. At length it was over, and Owen rose to depart; he stood for a minute on the floor, and seemed to take a survey of his cold, cheerless house, and then of his family; he cleared his throat several times, but did not speak.

“Kathleen,” said he, at length, “in the name of God, I’ll go; and may his blessin’ be about you, asthore machree, and guard you and these darlin’s till I come back to yeess.”

Kathleen’s faithful heart could bear no more; she laid herself on his bosom—clung to his neck—and, as the parting kiss was given, she wept aloud, and Owen’s tears fell silently down his worn cheeks. The children crowded about them in loud wailings, and the grief of this virtuous and afflicted family was of that profound description which is ever the companion, in such scenes, of pure and genuine love.

“Owen!” she exclaimed—“Owen, *a-suilish mahuil agus machree!*¹ I doubt we wor wrong in thinkin’ of this journey. How can you, mavourneen, walk all the way to Dublin, and you so worn and weakly wid that sickness, and the bad feedin’ both before and since? Och, give it up, achree, and stay wid us—let what will happen. You’re not able for sich a journey,

¹ Light of my eyes and of my heart.

indeed, you're not. Stay wid me and the childhre, Owen ; sure we'd be so lonesome widout you—will you, agraph ? and the Lord will do for us some other way, maybe."

Owen pressed his faithful wife to his heart, and kissed her chaste lips with a tenderness which the heartless votaries of fashionable life can never know.

"Kathleen, asthore," he replied, in those terms of endearment which flow so tenderly through the language of the people—"sure whin I remimber your fair young face—your yellow hair, and the light that was in your eyes, acushla machree—but that's gone long ago—och, don't ax me to stop ! Isn't your lightsome laugh, whin you wor young, in my ears ? and your step that ud not bend the flower of the field—Kathleen, I can't, indeed I can't, bear to think of what you wor, nor of what you are now, when, in the coorse of age and natur, but a small change ought to be upon you ! Sure I ought to make every struggle to take you and these sorrowful crathurs out of the state you're in."

The children flocked about them, and joined their entreaties to those of their mother. "Father, don't lave us—we'll be lonesome if you go ; and if my mother ud get unwell, who'd be to take care of her ? Father, don't lave your own 'weeny crathurs' (a pet name he had for them)—maybe the meal ud be eat out before you'd come back ; or maybe something ud happen you in that strange place."

"Indeed, there's truth in what they say, Owen," said the wife ; "do be said by your own Kathleen for this time, and don't take sich a long journey upon you. Aftther all, maybe, you wouldn't see him—sure the nabours will help us, if you could only humble yourself to ax them !"

"Kathleen," said Owen, "when this is past you'll be glad I went—indeed you will ; sure it's only the tindher feelin' of your hearts, darlin's. Who knows what the landlord may do when I see himself, and show him these resates—every penny paid him by our own family. Let me go, acushla ; it *does* cut me to the heart to lave yees the way yees are in, even for a while ; but it's far worse to see your poor wasted faces, widout havin' it in my power to do anything for yees."

He then kissed them again one by one, and pressing the affectionate partner of his sorrows to his breaking heart, he bade God bless them, and set out in the twilight of a bitter March morning. He had not gone many yards from the door when little Alley ran after him in tears ; he felt her hand upon the skirts of his coat, which she plucked with a smile of

affection that neither tears nor sorrow could repress. "Father, kiss *me* again," said she. He stooped down and kissed her tenderly. The child then ascended a green ditch, and Owen, as he looked back, saw her standing upon it; her fair tresses were tossed by the blast about her face, as with straining eyes she watched him receding from her view. Kathleen and the other children stood at the door, and also with deep sorrow watched his form, until the angle of the bridle-road rendered him no longer visible; after which they returned slowly to the fire and wept bitterly.

We believe no men are capable of bearing greater toil or privation than the Irish. Owen's *viaticum* was only two or three oaten cakes tied in a little handkerchief, and a few shillings in silver to pay for his bed. With this small stock of food and money, an oaken stick in his hand, and his wife's kerchief tied about his waist, he undertook a journey of one hundred and eighty miles in quest of a landlord who, so far from being acquainted with the distresses of his tenantry, scarcely knew even their names, and not one of them in person.

Our scene now changes to the metropolis. One evening, about half-past six o'clock, a toil-worn man turned his steps to a splendid mansion in Mountjoy Square; his appearance was drooping, fatigued, and feeble. As he went along he examined the numbers on the respective doors, until he reached *one*—before which he stopped for a moment; he then stepped out upon the street, and looked through the windows, as if willing to ascertain whether there was any chance of his object being attained. Whilst in this situation a carriage rolled rapidly up, and stopped with a sudden check that nearly threw the horses on their haunches. In an instant the thundering knock of the servant intimated the arrival of some person of rank; the hall-door was opened, and Owen, availing himself of that opportunity, entered the hall. Such a visitor, however, was too remarkable to escape notice. The hand of the menial was rudely placed against his breast, and as the usual impertinent interrogatories were put to him, the pampered ruffian kept pushing him back, until the afflicted man stood upon the upper step leading to the door.

"For the sake of God, let me spake but two words to him. I'm his tenant; and I know he's too much of a gentleman to turn away a man that has lived upon his honour's estate—father and son—for upwards of two hundre years. My name's Owen ——"

"You can't see him, my good fellow, at this hour. Go to

Mr. M——, his agent ; we have company to dinner. He never speaks to a tenant on business ; his agent manages all that. Please leave the way ; here's more company."

As he uttered the last word he pushed Owen back, who, forgetting that the stairs were behind him, fell, received a severe cut, and was so completely stunned that he lay senseless and bleeding. Another carriage drove up, as the fellow, now much alarmed, attempted to raise him from the steps, and by order of the gentleman who came in it, he was brought into the hall. The circumstance now made some noise. It was whispered about that one of Mr. ——'s tenants, a drunken fellow from the country, wanted to break in forcibly to see him ; but then it was also asserted that his skull was broken, and that he lay dead in the hall. Several of the gentlemen above stairs, on hearing that a man had been killed, immediately assembled about him, and by the means of restoratives he soon recovered, though the blood streamed copiously from the wound in the back of his head.

"Who are you, my good man?" said Mr. S——.

Owen looked about him rather vacantly, but soon collected himself, and replied in a mournful and touching tone of voice, "I'm one of your honour's tenants from Tubber Derg. My name is Owen M'Carthy, your honour—that is, if you be Mr. ——."

"And pray what brought you to town, M'Carthy?"

"I wanted to make an humble appale to your honour's feelin's in regard of my bit of farm. I and my poor family, your honour, have been broken down by hard times and the sickness of the sason—God knows how *they* are."

"If you wish to speak to me about that, my good man, you must know I refer all these matters to my agent—go to him : he knows them best ; and whatever is right and proper to be done for you, he will do it. Sinclair, give him a crown, and send him to the —— Dispensary to get his head dressed. I say, Carthy, go to my agent ; he knows whether your claim is just or not, and will attend to it accordingly."

"Plase your honour, I've been wid him, and he says he can do nothin' whatsomever for me. I went two or three times, and couldn't see him, he was so busy ; and when I did get a word or two wid him, he tould me there was more offered for my land than I'm payin' ; and that if I did not pay up, I must be put out—God help me !"

"But I tell you, Carthy, I never interfere between him and my tenants."

"Och, indeed, and it would be well both for your honour's tenants and yourself if you did, sir. Your honour ought to know, sir, more about us, and how we're thrated. I'm an honest man, sir, and I tell you so for your good."

"And pray, sir," said the agent, stepping forward, for he had arrived a few minutes before, and heard the last observation of M'Carthy—"pray, how are they treated, you that know so well, and are so honest a man? As for honesty, you might have referred to me for that, I think," he added.

"Mr. M——," said Owen, "we're thrated very badly. Sir, you needn't look at me, for I'm not afeerd to spake the thruth; no bullyin', sir, will make me say anything in your favour that you don't deserve. You've broken the half of them by severity; you've turned the tenants aginst yourself and his honour here; and I tell you now, though you're to the fore, that, in the coorse of a short time, there'll be bad work upon the estate, except his honour here looks into his own affairs, and hears the complaints of the people. Look at these resates, yer honour, they'll show you, sir——"

"Carthy, I can hear no such language against the gentleman to whom I entrust the management of my property; of course I refer the matter solely to him; I can do nothing in it."

"Kathleen, avourneen!" exclaimed the poor man, as he looked up despairingly to heaven—"and ye, poor darlin's of my heart! Is this the news I'm to have for yees whin I go home? As you hope for mercy, sir, don't turn away your ear from my petition, that I'd humbly make to *yourself*. Cowld, and hunger, and hardship are at home before me, yer honour. If you'd be plased to look at these resates, you'd see that I always paid my rent, and 'twas sickness and hard times——"

"And your own honesty, industry, and good conduct," said the agent, giving a dark and malignant sneer at him. "Carthy, it shall be my business to see that you do not spread a bad spirit through the tenantry much longer. Sir, you have heard the fellow's admission. It is an implied threat that he will give us much serious trouble. There is not such another incendiary on your property—not one, upon my honour."

"Sir," said a servant, "dinner is on the table."

"Sinclair," said his landlord, "give him another crown, and tell him to trouble me no more." Saying which, he and the agent went up to the drawing-room, and in a moment Owen saw a large party sweep downstairs, full of glee and vivacity, by whom both himself and his distresses were as completely forgotten as if they had never existed.

He now slowly departed, and knew not whether the house steward had given him money or not until he felt it in his hand. A cold, sorrowful weight lay upon his heart; the din of the town deadened his affliction into a stupor; but an overwhelming sense of his disappointment and a conviction of the agent's diabolical falsehood entered like barbed arrows into his heart.

On leaving the steps he looked up to heaven in the distraction of his agonising thoughts; the clouds were black and lowering, the wind stormy, and as it carried them on its dark wing along the sky, he wished, if it were the will of God, that his head lay in the quiet graveyard where the ashes of his forefathers reposed in peace. But he again remembered his Kathleen and their children, and the large tears of anguish, deep and bitter, rolled slowly down his cheeks.

We will not trace him into an hospital, whither the wound on his head occasioned him to be sent, but simply state that, on the second week after this, a man with his head bound in a handkerchief, lame, bent, and evidently labouring under severe illness or great affliction, might be seen toiling slowly up the little hill that commanded a view of Tubber Derg. On reaching the top he sat down to rest for a few minutes, but his eye was eagerly turned to the house which contained all that was dear to him on this earth. The sun was setting, and shone with half his disc visible, in that dim and cheerless splendour which produces almost in every temperament a feeling of melancholy. His house, which in happier days formed so beautiful and conspicuous an object in the view, was now, from the darkness of its walls, scarcely discernible. The position of the sun, too, rendered it more difficult to be seen, and Owen, for it was he, shaded his eyes with his hand, to survey it more distinctly. Many a harrowing thought and remembrance passed through his mind as his eye traced its dim outline in the fading light. He had done his duty—he had gone to the fountain-head, with a hope that his simple story of affliction might be heard. But all was fruitless: the only gleam of hope that opened upon their misery had now passed into darkness and despair for ever. He pressed his aching forehead with distraction as he thought of this; then clasped his hands bitterly, and groaned aloud.

At length he rose and proceeded with great difficulty, for the short rest had stiffened his weak and fatigued joints. As he approached home his heart sank; and as he ascended the blood-red stream which covered the bridle-way that led to his house, what with fatigue and affliction, his agitation weakened

him so much that he stopped and leaned on his staff several times that he might take breath.

"It's too dark, maybe, for them to see me, or poor Kathleen would send the darlin's to give me the *she dha vea*.¹ Kathleen, avourneen machree, how my heart beats wid long to see you, asthore, and to see the weeny crathurs—glory be to Him that has left *them* to me—praise and glory to His name!"

He was now within a few perches of the door; but a sudden misgiving shot across his heart when he saw it shut, and no appearance of smoke from the chimney, nor of stir or life about the house. He advanced.

"Mother of glory, what's this?—but, wait, let me rap again. Kathleen—Kathleen—are you widin, avourneen? Owen—Alley—arn't yees widin, childhre? Alley, sure I'm come back to yees all!" and he rapped more loudly than before. A dark breeze swept through the bushes as he spoke, but no voice nor sound proceeded from the house; all was still as death within. "Alley!" he called once more to his little favourite, "I'm come home wid something for you, asthore. I didn't forget *you*, alanna—I brought it from Dublin all the way—Alley!" but the gloomy murmur of the blast was the only reply.

Perhaps the most intense of all that he knew as misery was that which he then felt; but this state of suspense was soon terminated by the appearance of a neighbour who was passing.

"Why, thin, Owen, but yer welcome home agin, my poor fellow; and I'm sorry that I haven't betther news for you, and so are all of us."

He whom he addressed had almost lost the power of speech.

"Frank," said he, and he wrung his hand, "what—what? was death among them? for the sake of heaven, spake!"

The severe pressure which he received in return ran like a shock of paralysis to his heart. "Owen, you must be a man; every one pities yees, and may the Almighty pity and support yees! She is indeed, Owen, gone; the weeny fair-haired child, your favourite Alley, is gone. Yestherday she was berid; and dacently the nabours attinded the place, and sent in, as far as they had it, both mate and dhrink to Kathleen and the other ones. Now, Owen, you've heard it; trust in God, an' be a man."

A deep and convulsive throe shook him to the heart. "Gone!—the fair-haired one!—Alley!—Alley!—the pride of both our hearts; the sweet, the quiet, and the sorrowful child, that

¹ The welcome.

seldom played wid the rest, but kept wid mys——! Oh, my darlin', my darlin'! gone from my eyes for ever! God of glory! won't you support me this night of sorrow and misery!" With a sudden yet profound sense of humility he dropped on his knees at the threshold, and as the tears rolled down his convulsed cheeks, exclaimed, in a burst of sublime piety not at all uncommon amongst our peasantry, "I thank you, O my God! I thank you, an' I put myself an' my weeny ones, my *pastchee boght*, into your hands. I thank you, O God, for what has happened! Keep me up and support me—och, I want it! You loved the weeny one, and you took her; she was the light of my eyes, and the pulse of my broken heart; but you took her, blessed Father of heaven! an' we can't be angry wid you for so doin'. Still, if you had spared *her*—if—if—oh, blessed Father, my heart was *in* the *very* one you took—but I thank you, O God! May she rest in pace, now and for ever, Amin!"

He then rose up, and, slowly wiping the tears from his eyes, departed.

"Let me hould your arm, Frank, dear," said he. "I am weak and tired wid a long journey. Och, and can it be that she's gone—the fair-haired colleen! When I was lavin' home, an' had kissed them all—'twas the first time we ever parted, Kathleen and I, since our marriage—the blessed child came over an' held up her mouth, sayin', 'Kiss *me* agin, father!' and this was afther herself an' all of them had kissed me afore. But och, oh! Blessed Mother, Frank, where's my Kathleen and the rest?—and why are they out of their own place?"

"Owen, I tould you awhile ago that you must be a man. I gave you the worst news first, an' what's to come doesn't signify much. It was too dear; for if any man could live upon it, you could—you have neither house nor home, Owen, nor land. An ordher came from the agint, your last cow was taken, so was all you had in the world—hem!—barrin' a thrifle. No, bad manners to it—no, you're not widout a home, anyway—the family's in my barn, brave and comfortable, compared to what your own house was, that let in the wather through the roof like a sieve; and while the same barn's to the fore, never say you want a home."

"God bless you, Frank, for that goodness to them and me. If you're not rewarded for it here, you will be in a betther place. Och, I long to see Kathleen and the childhre! But I'm fairly broken down, Frank, and hardly able to mark the ground; and, indeed, no wondher, if you knew but all; still, let God's will be done! Poor Kathleen, I must bear up afore

her, or she'll break her heart, for I know how she loved the golden-haired darlin' that's gone from us. Och, and how did she go, Frank, for I left her betther?"

"Why, the poor girsha took a relapse, and wasn't strong enough to bear up against the last attack; but it's one comfort that you know she's happy."

Owen stood for a moment, and, looking solemnly in his neighbour's face, exclaimed in a deep and exhausted voice, "Frank!"

"What are you goin' to say, Owen?"

"The heart widin me's broke—broke!"

The large tears rolled down his weather-beaten cheeks, and he proceeded in silence to the house of his friend. There was, however, a feeling of sorrow in his words and manner which Frank could not withstand. He grasped Owen's hand, and, in a low and broken voice, simply said, "Keep your spirits up—keep them up."

When they came to the barn in which his helpless family had taken up their temporary residence, Owen stood for a moment to collect himself; but he was nervous, and trembled with repressed emotion. They then entered; and Kathleen, on seeing her beloved and affectionate husband, threw herself on his bosom, and for some time felt neither joy nor sorrow—she had swooned. The poor man embraced her with a tenderness at once mournful and deep. The children, on seeing their father safely returned, forgot their recent grief and clung about him with gladness and delight. In the meantime Kathleen recovered, and Owen for many minutes could not check the loud and clamorous grief—now revived by the presence of her husband—with which the heart-broken and emaciated mother deplored her departed child; and Owen himself, on once more looking among the little ones—on seeing her little frock hanging up, and her stool vacant by the fire—on missing her voice and her blue, laughing eyes, and remembering the affectionate manner in which, as with a presentiment of death, she held up her little mouth and offered him the last kiss—he slowly pulled the toys and cakes he had purchased for her out of his pocket, surveyed them for a moment, and then, putting his hands on his face, bent his head upon his bosom and wept with the vehement outpouring of a father's sorrow.

The reader perceives that he was a meek man, that his passions were not dark nor violent; he bore no revenge to those who neglected or injured him; and in this he differed from too many of his countrymen. No; his spirit was broken down with sorrow, and had not room for the fiercer and more

destructive passions. His case excited general pity. Whatever his neighbours could do to soothe him and alleviate his affliction was done. His farm was not taken; for fearful threats were held out against those who might venture to occupy it. In these threats he had nothing to do; on the contrary, he strongly deprecated them. Their existence, however, was deemed by the agent sufficient to justify him in his callous and malignant severity towards him.

We did not write this story for effect. Our object was to relate facts that occurred. In Ireland there is much blame justly attached to landlords for their neglect and severity in such depressed times towards their tenants. There is also much that is not only indefensible but atrocious on the part of the tenants. But can the landed proprietors of Ireland plead ignorance or want of education for their neglect and rapacity? whilst the crimes of the tenants, on the contrary, may in general be ascribed to both. He who lives, as perhaps his forefathers have done, upon any man's property, and fails from unavoidable calamity, has as just and clear a right to assistance from the landlord as if the amount of that aid were a bonded debt. Common policy, common sense, and common justice should induce the Irish landlords to lower their rents according to the market for agricultural produce; otherwise poverty, famine, crime, and vague political speculations, founded upon idle hopes of a general transfer of property, will spread over and convulse the kingdom. Any man who looks into our poverty may see that our landlords ought to reduce their rents to a standard suitable to the times and to the ability of the tenant.

But to return. Owen for another year struggled on for his family without success; his firm spirit *was* broken; employment he could not get, and even had it been regular he would have found it impracticable to support his helpless wife and children by his labour. The next year unhappily was also one of sickness and of want; the country was not only a wide waste of poverty, but overspread with typhus fever. One Saturday night he and the family found themselves without food; they had not tasted a morsel for twenty-four hours. There were murmurings and tears, and finally a low conversation among them, as if they held a conference upon some subject which filled them with both grief and satisfaction. In this alternation of feeling did they pass the time until the sharp gnawing of hunger was relieved by sleep. A keen December wind blew with a bitter blast on the following morning; the rain was borne along upon it with violence, and the cold was

chill and piercing. Owen, his wife, and their six children issued at daybreak out of the barn in which, ever since their removal from Tubber Derg, they had lived until then; their miserable fragments of bedclothes were tied in a bundle to keep them dry; their pace was slow, need we say sorrowful; all were in tears. Owen and Kathleen went first, with a child upon the back, and another in the hand, of each. Their route lay by their former dwelling, the door of which was open, for it had not been inhabited. On passing it they stood a moment; then with a simultaneous impulse both approached—entered—and took one last look of a spot to which their hearts clung with enduring attachment. They then returned; and as they passed, Owen put forth his hand, picked a few small pebbles out of the wall, and put them in his pocket.

"Farewell!" said he, "and may the blessin' of God rest upon you! We now lave you for ever! We're goin' at last to beg our bread through the world wide, where none will know of the happy days we passed widin your walls! We *must* lave you; but glory be to the Almighty, we are goin' wid a clear conscience; we took no revenge into our own hands, but left everything to God above us. We are poor, but there is neither blood, nor murder, nor dishonesty upon our heads. Don't cry, Kathleen—don't cry, childhre; there is still a good God above, who can and may do something for us *yet*, glory be to his name!"

He then passed on with his family, which, including himself, made in all eight paupers, being an additional burden upon the country which might easily have been avoided. His land was about two years waste, and when it was ultimately taken the house was a ruin, and the money allowed by the landlord for building a new one, together with the loss of two years' rent, would, if humanely directed, have enabled Owen M'Carthy to remain a solvent tenant.

When an Irish peasant is reduced to pauperism he seldom commences the melancholy task of soliciting alms in his native place. The trial is always a severe one, and he is anxious to hide his shame and misery from the eyes of those who know him. This is one reason why some system of poor-laws should be introduced into the country. Paupers of this description become a burden upon strangers, whilst those who are capable of entering with friendly sympathy into their misfortunes have no opportunity of assisting them. Indeed, this shame of seeking alms from those who have known the mendicant in better days is a proof that the absence of poor-laws takes away from the poorer classes one of the strongest incitements to

industry. For instance, if every pauper in Ireland were confined to his own parish, and compelled to beg from his acquaintances, the sense of shame alone would, by stirring them up to greater industry, reduce the number of mendicants one-half. There is a strong spirit of family pride in Ireland, which would be sufficient to make many poor of both sexes exert themselves to the uttermost rather than cast a stain upon their name, or bring a blush to the face of their relations. But now it is not so ; the mendicant sets out to beg, and in every instance commences his new mode of life in some distant part of the country, where his name and family are not known.

Indeed, it is astonishing how any man can for a moment hesitate to form his opinion upon the subject of poor-laws. The English and Scotch gentry know something about the middle and lower classes of their respective countries, and of course they have a fixed system of provision for the poor in each. The ignorance of the Irish gentry upon almost every subject connected with the real good of the people is only in keeping with their ignorance of the people themselves. It is to be feared, however, that their disinclination to introduce poor-laws arises less from actual ignorance than from an illiberal selfishness. The facts of the case are these :—In Ireland the whole support of the inconceivable multitude of paupers, who swarm like locusts over the surface of the country, rests upon the middle and lower classes, or rather upon the latter, for there is scarcely such a thing in this unhappy country as a middle class. In not one out of a thousand instances do the gentry contribute to the mendicant poor. In the first place, a vast proportion of our landlords are absentees, who squander upon their own pleasures or vices, in the theatres, saloons, or gaming-houses of France, or in the softer profligacies of Italy, that which ought to return in some shape to stand in the place of duties so shamefully neglected. These persons contribute nothing to the poor, except the various evils which their absence entails upon them.

On the other hand, the *resident* gentry never in any case assist a beggar, even in the remote parts of the country, where there are no Mendicity Institutions. Nor do the beggars ever think of applying to them. They know that his honour's dogs would be slipped at them ; or that the whip might be laid perhaps to the shoulders of a broken-hearted father, with his brood of helpless children wanting food ; perhaps upon the emaciated person of a miserable widow, who begs for her orphans, only because the hands that supported, and would have defended, both her and them are mouldered into dust.

Upon the middle and lower classes, therefore, comes *directly* the heavy burden of supporting the great mass of pauperism that presses upon Ireland. It is certain that the Irish landlords know this, and that they are reluctant to see any law enacted which might make the performance of their duties to the poor compulsory. This, indeed, is natural in men who have so inhumanly neglected them.

But what must the state of a country be where those who are on the way to pauperism themselves are exclusively burdened with the support of the vagrant poor? It is like putting additional weight on a man already sinking under the burden he bears. The landlords suppose that because the maintenance of the idle who are able, and of the aged and infirm who are not able, to work comes upon the renters of land, they themselves are exempted from their support. This, if true, is as bitter a stigma upon their humanity as upon their sense of justice; but it is not true. Though the cost of supporting such an incredible number of the idle and helpless does, in the first place, fall upon the tenant, yet, by diminishing his means, and by often compelling him to purchase towards the end of the season a portion of food equal to that which he has given away in charity, it certainly becomes ultimately a clear deduction from the landlord's rent. In either case it is a deduction, but in the latter it is often doubly so; inasmuch as the poor tenants must frequently pay at the close of a season double, perhaps treble, the price which provision brought at the beginning of it.

Any person conversant with the Irish people must frequently have heard such dialogues as the following during the application of a beggar for alms.

Mendicant. "We're axin' your charity, for God's sake!"

Poor Tenant. "Whethen, for his sake you would get it, poor crathur, if we had it; but it's not for you widin the four corners of the house. It ud be well for us if we had *now* all we gave away in charity *durin' the whole year*; we wouldn't have to be buyin' for ourselves at three prices. Why don't you go up to the Big House? *They're* rich, and can afford it."

Mendicant (with a shrug, which sets all his coats and bags in motion). "Och! och! The Big House, inagh! Musha, do you want me an' the childhre here to be torn to pieces wid the dogs? or lashed wid a whip by one o' the sarwints? No, no, avourneen (with a hopeless shake of the head). That ud be a blue look-up, like a clear evenin'."

Poor Tenant. "Then indeed we haven't it to help you now, poor man. We're buyin' ourselves."

Mendicant. "Thin, throth, that's lucky, so it is! I've as purty a grain o' male here as you'd wish to thicken wather wid, that I struv to get together in hopes to be able to buy a quarther o' tobaccy, along wid a pair o' new bades an' a scapular for myself. I'm suspicious that there's about a stone ov it altogether. You can have it anundher the market price, for I'm frettin' at not havin' the scapular an me. Sure the Lord will sind me an' the childhre a bit an' sup some way else—glory to his name!—besides a lock o' praties in the corner o' the bag here, that'll do us for this day, anyway."

The bargain is immediately struck, and the poor tenant is glad to purchase, even from a beggar, his stone of meal, in consequence of getting it a few pence under market price. Such scenes as this, which are of frequent occurrence in the country parts of Ireland, need no comment.

This certainly is not a state of things which should be permitted to exist. Every man ought to be compelled to support the poor of his native parish according to his means. It is an indelible disgrace to the legislature so long to have neglected the paupers of Ireland. Is it to be thought of with common patience that a person rolling in wealth shall feed upon his turtle, his venison, and his costly luxuries of every description, for which he will not scruple to pay the highest price—that this heartless and selfish man, whether he reside at home or abroad, shall thus unconscionably pamper himself with viands purchased by the toil of the people, and yet not contribute to their miseries when poverty, sickness, or age throws them upon the scanty support of casual charity?

Shall this man be permitted to batten in luxury in a foreign land or at home, to whip our paupers from his carriage, or hunt them, like beasts of prey, from his grounds, whilst the lower classes—the gradually decaying poor—are compelled to groan under the burden of their support in addition to their other burdens? Surely it is not a question which admits of argument. This subject has been darkened and made difficult by fine-spun and unintelligible theories, when the only knowledge necessary to understand it may be gained by spending a few weeks in some poor village in the interior of the country. As for Parliamentary Committees upon this or any other subject, they are, with reverence be it spoken, thoroughly contemptible. They will summon and examine witnesses who, for the most part, know little about the habits or distresses of the poor; public money will be wasted in defraying their expenses and in printing reports; resolutions will be passed; something will be

said about it in the House of Commons ; and in a few weeks, after resolving and re-resolving, it is as little thought of as if it had never been the subject of investigation. In the meantime the evil proceeds—becomes more inveterate—eats into the already declining prosperity of the country—whilst those who suffer under it have the consolation of knowing that a Parliamentary Committee sat longer upon it than so many geese upon their eggs, but hatched nothing. Two circumstances connected with pauperism in Ireland are worthy of notice. The first is this—the Roman Catholics, who certainly constitute the bulk of the population, feel themselves called upon, from the peculiar tenets of their religion, to exercise indiscriminate charity largely to the begging poor. They act under the impression that eleemosynary good works possess the power of cancelling sin to an extent almost incredible. Many of their religious legends are founded upon this view of the case ; and the reader will find an appropriate one in the priest's sermon, as given in our tale of the "Poor Scholar." That legend is one which the author has many a time heard from the lips of the people, by whom it was implicitly believed. A man who may have committed a murder over night will the next day endeavour to wipe away his guilt by alms given for the purpose of getting the benefit of "the poor man's prayer." The principle of assisting our distressed fellow-creatures, when rationally exercised, is one of the best in society ; but here it becomes entangled with error, superstition, and even with crime—acts as a bounty upon imposture, and in some degree predisposes to guilt, from an erroneous belief that sin may be cancelled by alms and the prayers of mendicant impostors.

The second point in connection with pauperism is the immoral influence that proceeds from the relation in which the begging poor in Ireland stand towards the class by whom they are supported. These, as we have already said, are the poorest, least educated, and consequently the most ignorant description of the people. They are also the most numerous. There have been for centuries, probably since the Reformation itself, certain opinions floating among the lower classes in Ireland, all tending to prepare them for some great change in their favour, arising from the discomfiture of heresy, the overthrow of their enemies, and the exaltation of themselves and their religion.

Scarcely had the public mind subsided after the Rebellion of Ninety-eight, when the success of Bonaparte directed the eyes and the hopes of the Irish people towards *him* as the person designed to be their deliverer. Many a fine fiction has the

author of this work heard about that great man's escapes, concerning the bullets that conveniently turned aside from his person, and the sabres that civilly declined to cut him down. Many prophecies too were related, in which the glory of this country under his reign was touched off in the happiest colours. Pastorini also gave such notions an impulse. Eighteen twenty-five was to be the year of their deliverance; George the Fourth was never to fill the British throne; and the mill of Lowth was to be turned three times with human blood. The miller with the two thumbs was then living, said the mendicants, for they were the principal propagators of these opinions, and the great expounders of their own prophecies; so that, of course, there could be no further doubt upon the subject. Several of them had seen him—a red-haired man with broad shoulders, stout legs, exactly as a miller ought to have, and two thumbs on his right hand; all precisely as the prophecy had stated. Then there was *Beal-derg*, and several others of the fierce old Milesian chiefs, who along with their armies lay in an enchanted sleep, all ready to awake and take a part in the delivery of the country. "Sure such a man," and they would name him, in the time of the mendicant's grandfather, "was once going to a fair to sell a horse—well and good; the time was the dawn of morning, a little before daylight. He met a man who undertook to purchase his horse. They agreed upon the price, and the seller of him followed the buyer into a Rath, where he found a range of horses, each with an armed soldier asleep by his side, ready to spring upon him if awoke. The purchaser cautioned the owner of the horse, as they were about to enter the subterraneous dwelling, against touching either horse or man; but the countryman, happening to stumble, inadvertently laid his hand upon a sleeping soldier, who immediately leaped up, drew his sword, and asked, '*Wuill anam inh?*' (Is the time in it? Is the time arrived?) To which the horse-dealer of the Rath replied, '*Ha niel. Gho dhee collhow areesht.*' (No; go to sleep again.) Upon this the soldier immediately sank down in his former position, and unbroken sleep reigned throughout the cave." The influence on the warm imaginations of ignorant people of the fictions concocted by vagrant mendicants is very pernicious. They fill their minds with the most palpable absurdities, and, what is worse, with opinions which, along with being injurious to those who receive them, in every instance insure for those who propagate them a cordial and kind reception.

These mendicants consequently pander, for their own selfish

ends, to the prejudices of the ignorant, which they nourish and draw out in a manner that has in no slight degree been subversive of the peace of the country. Scarcely any political circumstance occurs which they do not immediately seize upon and twist to their own purposes, or, in other words, to the opinions of those from whom they derive their support. When our present police first appeared in their uniforms and black belts, another prophecy, forsooth, was fulfilled. Immediately before the downfall of heresy a body of "Black Militia" was to appear. The police, then, are the black militia, and the people consider themselves another step nearer the consummation of their vague speculations.

In the year Ninety-eight the Irish mendicants were active agents, clever spies, and expert messengers on the part of the people; and to this day they carry falsehood and the materials of outrage in its worst shape into the bosom of peaceable families, who would otherwise never become connected with a system which is calculated to bring nothing but ruin and destruction upon those who permit themselves to join it.

This evil, and it is no small one, would by the introduction of poor-laws be utterly abolished. The people would not only be more easily improved by purer knowledge; but education, when received, would not be corrupted by the infusion into it of such ingredients as the above. In many other points of view the confirmed and hackneyed mendicants of Ireland are a great evil to the morals of the people. We could easily detail them, but such not being our object at present, we will now dismiss the subject of poor-laws, and resume our narrative.

Far—far different from this description of impostors were Owen M'Carthy and his family. Their misfortunes were not the consequences of negligence or misconduct on their own part. They struggled long but unavailingly against high rents and low markets; against neglect on the part of the landlord and his agent; against sickness, famine, and death. They had no alternative but to beg or starve. Owen was willing to work, but he could not procure employment, and provided he could, the miserable sum of sixpence a day, when food was scarce and dear, would not support him, his wife, and six little ones. He became a pauper, therefore, only to avoid starvation.

Heavy and black was his heart, to use the strong expression of the people, on the bitter morning when he set out to encounter the dismal task of seeking alms in order to keep life in himself and his family. The plan was devised on the preceding night; but to no mortal, except his wife, was it com-

municated. The honest pride of a man whose mind was above committing a mean action would not permit him to reveal what he considered the first stain that ever was known to rest upon the name of M'Carthy. He therefore sallied out under the beating of the storm, and proceeded, without caring much whither he went, until he got considerably beyond the bounds of his own parish.

In the meantime hunger pressed keenly upon him and them. The day had no appearance of clearing up; the heavy rain and sleet beat into their thin, worn garments, and the clamour of his children for food began to grow more and more importunate. They came to the shelter of a hedge which enclosed on one side a remote and broken road, along which, in order to avoid the risk of being recognised, they had preferred travelling. Owen stood here for a few minutes to consult with his wife as to where and when they should "make a beginning," but on looking round he found her in tears.

"Kathleen, asthore," said he, "I can't bid you not cry; bear up, acushla machree, bear up. Sure, as I said when we came out this mornin', there's a good God above us that can still turn over the good lafe for us, if we put our hopes in him."

"Owen," said his sinking wife, "it's not altogether bekase we're brought to this that I'm cryin'. No, indeed."

"Thin what ails you, Kathleen, darlin'?"

The wife hesitated, and evaded the question for some time; but at length, upon his pressing her for an answer, with a fresh gush of sorrow she replied—

"Owen, since you *must* know—och, may God pity us!—since you must know, it's wid hunger—*wid hunger!* I kept, unknownst, a little bit of bread to give the childhre this mornin', and that was part of it I gave you yestherday early—I'm near two days fastin'."

"Kathleen! Kathleen! Och! sure I know your worth, avillish. You were too good a wife, an' too good a mother, a'most! God forgive me, Kathleen! I fretted about beggin', dear; but as my heavenly Father's above me, I'm now happier to beg wid you by my side, nor if I war in the best house in the province widout you! Hould up, avourneen, for a while. Come on, childhre, darlin's, an' the first house we meet we'll ax their char——, their assistance. Come on, darlin's, all of yees. Why, my heart's asier, so it is. Sure we have your mother, childhre, safe wid us, an' what signifies anything so long as *she's* left to us."

He then raised his wife tenderly, for she had been compelled to sit from weakness, and they bent their steps to a decent

farm-house that stood a few perches off the road, about a quarter of a mile before them.

As they approached the door the husband hesitated a moment; his face got paler than usual, and his lips quivered as he said, "Kathleen——"

"I know what you're goin' to say, Owen. No, acushla, *you* won't; I'll ax it myself."

"Do," said Owen, with difficulty; "I can't do it; but I'll overcome my pride afore long, I hope. It's thryin' to me, Kathleen, an' you know it is—for you know how little I ever expected to be brought to this."

"Husht, avillish! We'll thry, then, in the name o' God."

As she spoke, the children, herself, and her husband entered, to beg for the first time in their lives a morsel of food. Yes! timidly—with a blush of shame, red even to crimson, upon the pallid features of Kathleen—with grief acute and piercing—they entered the house together.

For some minutes they stood and spoke not. The unhappy woman, unaccustomed to the language of supplication, scarcely knew in what terms to crave assistance. Owen himself stood back, uncovered, his fine but much changed features overcast with an expression of deep affliction. Kathleen cast a single glance at him as if for encouragement. Their eyes met: she saw the upright man—the last remnant of the M'Carthy—himself once the friend of the poor, of the unhappy, of the afflicted—standing crushed and broken down by misfortunes which he had not deserved, waiting with patience for a morsel of charity. Owen, too, had *his* remembrances. He recollected the days when he sought and gained the pure and fond affections of his Kathleen; when beauty, and youth, and innocence encircled her with their light and their grace, as she spoke or moved; he saw her a happy wife and mother in her own home, kind and benevolent to all who required her good word or her good office, and remembered the sweetness of her light-hearted song; but now she was homeless. He remembered, too, how she used to plead with himself for the afflicted. It was but a moment; yet when their eyes met, that moment was crowded by recollections that flashed across their minds with a keen sense of a lot so bitter and wretched as theirs. Kathleen could not speak, although she tried; her sobs denied her utterance; and Owen involuntarily sat upon a chair, and covered his face with his hand.

To an observing eye it is never difficult to detect the cant of imposture, or to perceive distress when it is real. The good

woman of the house, as is usual in Ireland, was in the act of approaching them, unsolicited, with a double handful of meal—that is, what the Scotch and northern Irish call a *gowpen*, or as much as both hands locked together can contain—when, noticing their distress, she paused a moment, eyed them more closely, and exclaimed—

“What’s this? Why, there’s something wrong wid you, good people! But first an’ foremost take this, in the name an’ honour of God.”

“May the blessin’ of the same Man¹ rest upon yees!” replied Kathleen. “This is a sorrowful thrial to us; for it’s our first day to be upon the world; an’ this is the first help of the kind we ever axed for, or ever got; an’ indeed, now I find we haven’t even a place to carry it in. I’ve no—b—b—cloth, or anything to hould it.”

“Your first, is it?” said the good woman. “Your first! May the marcfil queen o’ heaven look down upon yees, but it’s a bitter day yees war driven out on! Sit down there, you poor crathur. God pity you, I pray this day, for you *have* a heart-broken look! Sit down awhile, near the fire, you an’ the childhre! Come over, darlin’s, an’ warm yourselves! Och, oh! but it’s the thousand pities to see sich fine childhre—handsome an’ good-lookin’ even as they are, brought to this! Come over, good man; get near the fire, for you’re wet an’ cowl’d, all of yees. Brian, *ludher* them two lazy thieves o’ dogs out o’ that. *Eiree suas, a wadhee bradagh, agus go mah a shin!*—be off wid yees, ye lazy divils, that’s not worth your feedin’! Come over, honest man.”

Owen and his family were placed near the fire; the poor man’s heart was full, and he sighed heavily.

“May He that it plased to thry us,” he exclaimed, “reward you for this! We are,” he continued, “a poor an’ a sufferin’ family; but it’s the will of God that we should be so, an’ sure we can’t complain widout committin’ sin. All we ax now is that it may be plasins’ to Him that brought us low to enable us to bear up undher our thrials. We would take it to our choice to beg an’ be honest, sooner nor to be wealthy an’ wicked! We have our failin’s an’ our sins, God help us; but still there’s nothin’ dark or heavy on our consciences. Glory be to the name of God for it!”

¹ God is sometimes thus termed in Ireland. By “Man” here is meant person or being. He is also called the “Man above”; although this must have been intended for, and often is applied to, Christ only.

"Throth, I believe you," replied the farmer's wife; "there's thruth an' honesty in your face; one may easily see the remains of dacency about yees all. Musha, throw your little things aside, an' stay where yees are to-day; you can't bring out the childhre undher the teem of rain an' sleet that's in it. Wurrah dheelish, but it's the bitther day all out! Faix, Paddy will get a dhrookin, so he will, at that weary fair wid the stirks, poor bouchal—a son of ours that's gone to Ballyboulteen to sell some cattle, an' he'll not be worth three hapuns afore he comes back. I hope he'll have sinse to go into some house when he's done an' dhry himself well, anyhow, besides takin' somethin' to keep out the cowl'd. Put by your things, an' don't think of goin' out sich a day."

"We thank you," replied Owen. "Indeed, we're glad to stay undher your roof; for, poor things, they're badly able to thravel sich a day—these childhre."

"Musha, yees ate no breakfast, maybe?"

Owen and his family were silent. The children looked wistfully at their parents, anxious that they should confirm what the good woman surmised; the father looked again at his famished brood and his sinking wife, and nature overcame him.

"Food did not crass our lips this day," replied Owen; "an' I may say hardly anything yestherday."

"Oh, blessed mother! Here, Katty Murray, drop scrubbin' that dresser, an' put down the midlin' pot for stirabout. Be livin'! *manim an diouol*, woman alive, handle yourself; you might a had it boilin' by this. God presarve us!—to be two days widout atin'! Be the crass, Katty, if you're not alive, I'll give you a douse o' the churnstaff that'll bring the fire to your eyes! Do you hear me?"

"I do hear you, an' did often feel you too, for fraid hearin' wouldn't do. You think there's no places in the world but your own, I b'lieve. Faix, indeed! it's well come up wid us to be randied about wid no less a switch than a churnstaff!"

"Is it givin' back talk you are? Bad end to me, if you look crucked but I'll lave you a mark to remember me by. What woman ud put up wid you but myself, you shkamin' flipe? It wasn't to give me your bad tongue I hired you, but to do your business; an' be the crass above us, if you turn your tongue on me agin, I'll give you the weight o' the churnstaff. Is it bekase they're poor people, that it plased God to bring to this, that you turn up your nose at doin' anything to sarve them? There's not wather enough there, I say—put in more. What signifies all

the stirabout that ud make? Put plinty in : it's bettther always to have too much than too little. Faix, I tell you, you'll want a male's meat an' a night's lodgin' afore you die, if you don't mend your manners."

"Och, musha, the poor girl is doin' her best," observed Kathleen; "an' I'm sure she wouldn't be guilty of usin' pride to the likes of us, or to any one that the Lord has laid his hand upon."

"She had bettther not, while I'm to the fore," said her mistress. "What is she herself? Sure if it was a sin to be poor, God help the world! No; it's neither a sin nor a shame."

"Thanks be to God, no," said Owen; "it's neither the one nor the other. So long as we keep a fair name, an' a clear conscience, we can't ever say that our case is hard."

After some further conversation, a comfortable breakfast was prepared for them, of which they partook with an appetite sharpened by their long abstinence from food. Their stay here was particularly fortunate, for as they were certain of a cordial welcome, and an abundance of that which they much wanted—wholesome food—the pressure of immediate distress was removed. They had time to think more accurately upon the little preparations for misery which were necessary, and, as the day's leisure was at their disposal, Kathleen's needle and scissors were industriously plied in mending the tattered clothes of her husband and her children, in order to meet the inclemency of the weather.

On the following morning, after another abundant breakfast, and substantial marks of kindness from their entertainers, they prepared to resume their new and melancholy mode of life. As they were about to depart, the farmer's wife addressed them in the following terms—the farmer himself, by the way, being but the shadow of his worthy partner in life—

Wife. "Now, good people, you're takin' the world on your heads——"

Farmer. "Ay, good people, you're takin' the world on your heads——"

Wife. "Hold your tongue, Brian, an' suck your dudeen. It's me that's spakin' to them, so none of your palaver, if you plase, till I'm done, an' then you may prache till Tib's Eve, an' that's neither before Christmas nor after it."

Farmer. "Sure I'm sayin' nothin', Evleen, barrin' houldin' my tongue, a *shuchar*."¹

¹ My sugar.

Wife. "You're takin' the world on yees, an' God knows 'tis a heavy load to carry, poor crathurs."

Farmer. "A heavy load, poor crathurs! God he knows it's that."

Wife. "Brian! *Gluntho ma?*—did you hear me? You'll be puttin' in your gab, an' me spakin'? How-an'-diver, as I was sayin', our house was the first yees came to, an' they say there's a great blessin' to thim that gives the *first* charity to a poor man or woman settin' out to look for their bit."

Farmer. "Throgs, ay! Whin they set out to look for their bit."

Wife. "By the crass, Brian, you'd vex a saint. What have you to say in it, you *pittiogue?* Hould your whisht now, an' suck your dudeen, I say; sure I allow you a quarther o' tobaccy a week, an' what right have you to be puttin' in your goster when other people's spakin'?"

Farmer. "Go an."

Wife. "So, you see, the long an' the short of it is, that whenever you happen to be in this side of the country, always come to *us*. You know the ould sayin'—when the poor man comes he brings a blessin', an' whin he goes he carries away a curse. You have as much meal as will last yees a day or two; an' God he sees you're heartily welcome to all yees got!"

Farmer. "God he sees you're heartily welcome——"

Wife. "*Chorp an diouol*, Brian, hould your tongue, or I'll turn you out o' the kitchen. One can't hear their own ears for you, you poor squakin' dhroner. By the crass, I'll—eh? Will you whisht, now?"

Farmer. "Go an. Amn't I dhrawin' my pipe?"

Wife. "Well, dhraw *it*; but don't dhraw me down upon you, barrin'—— Do you hear me? an' the strange people to the fore too! Well, the Lord be wid yees, and bless yees! But afore yees go, jist lave your blessin' wid us; for it's a good thim to have the blessin' of the poor."

"The Lord bless you an' yours!" said Owen fervently. "May you an' them never—oh, may you never—*never* suffer what we've suffered, nor know what it is to want a male's mate or a night's lodgin'!"

"Amin!" exclaimed Kathleen. "May the world flow upon you! for your good, kind heart deserves it."

Farmer. "An' whisper: I wish you'd offer up a prayer for the rulin' o' the tongue. The Lord might hear *you*, but there's no great hopes that ever he'll hear *me*; though I've prayed for it a'most ever since I was married, night an' day, winther an' summer; but no use—she's as bad as ever."

This was in a kind of friendly insinuating undertone to Owen, who on hearing it simply nodded his head, but made no other reply.

They then recommenced their journey, after having once more blessed, and been invited by, their charitable entertainers, who made them promise never to pass their house without stopping a night with them.

It is not our intention to trace Owen M'Carthy and his wife through all the variety which a wandering pauper's life affords. He never could reconcile himself to the habits of a mendicant. His honest pride and integrity of heart raised him above it; neither did he sink into the whine and cant of imposture, nor the slang of knavery. No; there was a touch of manly sorrow about him which neither time nor familiarity with his degraded mode of life could take away from him. His usual observation to his wife, and he never made it without a pang of intense bitterness, was, "Kathleen, darlin', it's thrue we have enough to ate an' to dhrink; but *we have no home!—no home!*" To a man like him it was a thought of surpassing bitterness indeed.

"Ah! Kathleen," he would observe, "if we had but the poorest shed that could be built, provided it was *our own*, wouldn't we be happy? The bread we ate, avourneen, doesn't do us good. We don't work for it; it's the bread of shame and idleness; and yet it's Owen M'Carthy that ates it! But, avourneen, that's past; an' we'll never see our own home, or our own hearth, agin. That's what's cuttin' into my heart, Kathleen. Never!—never!"

Many a trial, too, of another kind was his patience called upon to sustain; particularly from the wealthy and the more elevated in life, when his inexperience as a mendicant led him to solicit their assistance.

"Begone, sirrah, off my grounds!" one would say. "Why don't you work, you sturdy impostor," another would exclaim, "rather than stroll about so lazily, training your brats to the gallows?" "You should be taken up, fellow, as a vagrant," a third would observe; "and if I ever catch you coming up my avenue again, depend upon it, I will slip my dogs at you and your idle spawn."

Owen, on these occasions, turned away in silence. He did not curse them; but the pangs of his honest heart went before Him who will, sooner or later, visit upon the heads of such men their cruel spurning and neglect of the poor.

"Kathleen," he observed to his wife one day, about a year or

more after they had begun to beg—"Kathleen, I have been turnin' it in my mind that some of these childhre might sthrive to earn their bit an' sup, an' their little coverin' of clo'es, poor things. We might put them to herd cows in the summer, an' the *girshas* to somethin' else in the farmers' houses. What do you think, asthore?"

"For God's sake do, Owen; sure my heart's crushed to see them—my own childhre, that I could lay down my life for—beggin' from door to door. Och, do something for them that way, Owen, an' you'll relieve the heart that loves them. It's a sore sight to a mother's eye, Owen, to see her childhre beggin' their morsel."

"It is, darlin'—it is; we'll hire out the three eldest—Brian, an' Owen, an' Pether—to herd cows; an' we may get Peggy into some farmer's house to do loose jobs an' run of messages. Then we'd have only little Kathleen an' poor Ned along wid us. I'll thry, anyway, an' if I can get them places, who knows what may happen? I have a plan in my head that I'll tell you, thin."

"Arrah, what is it, Owen jewel? Sure if I know it, maybe when I'm sorrowful, that thinkin' of it, an' lookin' forrid to it, will make me happier. An' I'm sure, acushla, you would like that."

"But maybe, Kathleen, if it wouldn't come to pass, that the disappointment ud be heavy on you?"

"How could it, Owen? Sure we can't be worse nor we are, whatever happens!"

"Thru enough indeed, I forgot that; an' yet we might, Kathleen. Sure we'd be worse if we or the childhre had bad health."

"God forgive me thin for what I said! We might be worse. Well, but what is the plan, Owen?"

"Why, when we get the childhre places, I'll sthrive to take a little house, an' work as a cottar. Then, Kathleen, '*we'd have a home of our own.*' I'd work from light to light; I'd work before hours an' after hours; ay, nine days in the week, or we'd be comfortable in our own little home. We might be poor, Kathleen, I know that, an' hard pressed too; but then, as I said, we'd have our own home an' our own hearth; our morsel, if it ud be homely, would be sweet, for it would be the fruits of our own labour."

"Now, Owen, do you think you could manage to get that?"

"Wait, acushla, till we get the childhre settled. Then I'll

thry the other plan, for it's good to thry anything that could take us out of this disgraceful life."

This humble speculation was a source of great comfort to them. Many a time have they forgotten their sorrows in contemplating the simple picture of their happy little cottage. Kathleen, in particular, drew with all the vivid colouring of a tender mother and an affectionate wife the various sources of comfort and contentment to be found even in a cabin, whose inmates are blessed with a love of independence, industry, and mutual affection.

Owen, in pursuance of his intention, did not neglect, when the proper season arrived, to place out his eldest children among the farmers. The reader need not be told that there was that about him which gained respect. He had, therefore, little trouble in obtaining his wishes on this point, and, to his great satisfaction, he saw three of them hired out to earn their own support.

It was now a matter of some difficulty for him to take a cabin and get employment. They had not a single article of furniture, and neither bed nor bedding, with the exception of blankets almost worn past use. He was resolved, however, to give up, at all risks, the life of a mendicant. For this purpose he and his wife agreed to adopt a plan quite usual in Ireland under circumstances somewhat different from his : this was that Kathleen should continue to beg for their support until the first half-year of their children's service should expire ; and in the meantime that he, if possible, should secure employment for himself. By this means his earnings and those of his children might remain untouched, so that in half a year he calculated upon being able to furnish a cabin, and proceed, as a cottar, to work for and support his young children and his wife, who determined, on her part, not to be idle any more than her husband. As the plan was a likely one, and as Owen was bent on earning his bread rather than be a burthen to others, it is unnecessary to say that it succeeded. In less than a year he found himself once more in a home, and the force of what he felt on sitting for the first time since his pauperism at his own hearth may easily be conceived by the reader. For some years after this Owen got on slowly enough, his wages as a daily labourer being so miserable that it required him to exert every nerve to keep the house over their head. What, however, will not carefulness and a virtuous determination, joined to indefatigable industry, do ?

After some time, backed as he was by his wife, and even by

his youngest children, he found himself beginning to improve. In the mornings and the evenings he cultivated his garden and his rood of potato ground. He also collected with a wheelbarrow, which he borrowed from an acquaintance, compost from the neighbouring road; scoured an old drain before his door; dug rich earth, and tossed it into the pool of rotten water beside the house, and, in fact, adopted several other modes of collecting manure. By this means he had, each spring, a large portion of rich stuff on which to plant his potatoes. His landlord permitted him to spread this for planting upon his land; and Owen, ere long, instead of a rood, was able to plant half an acre, and ultimately an acre of potatoes. The produce of this being more than sufficient for the consumption of his family, he sold the surplus, and with the money gained by the sale was enabled to sow half an acre of oats, of which, when made into meal, he disposed of the greater share.

Industry is capital; for even when unaided by capital it creates it, whereas idleness with capital produces only poverty and ruin. Owen, after selling his meal and as much potatoes as he could spare, found himself able to purchase a cow. Here was means of making more manure; he had also straw enough for her provender during the winter. The cow, by affording milk to his family, enabled them to live more cheaply; her butter they sold, and this, in addition to his surplus meal and potatoes every year, soon made him feel that he had a few guineas to spare. He now bethought him of another mode of helping himself forward in the world. After buying the best "slip" of a pig he could find a sty was built for her, and ere long he saw a fine litter of young pigs within a snug shed. These he reared until they were about two months old, when he sold them, and found that he had considerably gained by the transaction. This department, however, was under the management of Kathleen, whose life was one of incessant activity and employment. Owen's children, during the period of his struggles and improvements, were, by his advice, multiplying *their* little capital as fast as himself. The two boys, who had now shot up into the stature of young men, were at work as labouring servants in the neighbourhood. The daughters were also engaged as servants with the adjoining farmers. The boys bought each a pair of two-year-old heifers, and the daughters one. These they sent to graze up in the mountains at a trifling charge for the first year or two; when they became springers they put them to rich infield grass for a few months, until they got a marketable appearance, after which their father brought

them to the neighbouring fairs, where they usually sold to great advantage, in consequence of the small outlay required in rearing them.

In fact, the principle of industry ran through the family. There was none of them idle, none of them a burthen or a check upon the profits made by the labourer. On the contrary, "they laid their shoulders together," as the phrase is, and proved to the world that when the proper disposition is followed up by suitable energy and perseverance, it must generally reward him who possesses it.

It is certainly true that Owen's situation in life *now* was essentially different from that which it had been during the latter years of his struggles *as a farmer*. It was much more favourable, and far better calculated to develop successful exertion. If there be a class of men deserving public sympathy, it is that of the small farmers of Ireland. Their circumstances are fraught with all that is calculated to depress and ruin them: rents far above their ability, increasing poverty, and bad markets. The land, which during the last war might have enabled the renter to pay three pounds per acre, and yet still maintain himself with tolerable comfort, could not now pay more than one pound, or, at the most, one pound ten; and yet such is the infatuation of landlords, that, in most instances, the terms of leases taken out then are rigorously exacted. Neither can the remission of yearly arrears be said to strike at the root of the evils under which they suffer. The fact of the disproportionate rent hanging over them is a disheartening circumstance that paralyses their exertion and sinks their spirits. If a landlord remit the rent for one term, he deals more harshly with the tenant at the next: whatever surplus, if any, his former indulgence leaves in the tenant's hands, instead of being expended upon his property as capital, and being permitted to lay the foundation of hope and prosperity, is drawn from him at next term, and the poor struggling tenant is thrown back into as much distress, embarrassment, and despondency as ever. There are, I believe, few tenants in Ireland of the class I allude to who are not one gale to three in arrear. Now, how can it be expected that such men will labour with spirit and earnestness to raise crops which they may never reap?—crops which the landlord may seize upon to secure as much of his rent as he can.

We have known a case in which the arrears were not only remitted, but the rent lowered to a reasonable standard, such as, considering the markets, could be paid. And what was the

consequence?" The tenant, who was looked upon as a negligent man, from whom scarcely any rent could be got, took courage, worked his farm with a spirit and success which he had not evinced before, and ere long was in a capacity to pay his gales to the very day ; so that the judicious and humane landlord was finally a gainer by his own excellent economy. This was an experiment, and it succeeded beyond expectation.

Owen M'Carthy did not work with more zeal and ability as a humble cottar than he did when a farmer ; but the tide was against him as a landholder, and instead of having advanced, he actually lost ground until he became a pauper. No doubt the peculiarly unfavourable run of two hard seasons, darkened by sickness and famine, were formidable obstacles to him ; but he must eventually have failed, even had they not occurred. They accelerated his downfall, but did not cause it.

The Irish people, though poor, are exceedingly anxious to be independent. Their highest ambition is to hold a farm. So strong is this principle in them that they will, without a single penny of capital, or any visible means to rely on, without consideration or forethought, come forward and offer a rent which, if they reflected only for a moment, they must feel to be unreasonably high. This, indeed, is a great evil in Ireland. But what, in the meantime, must we think of those imprudent landlords, and their more imprudent agents, who let their land to such persons, without proper inquiry into their means, knowledge of agriculture, and general character as moral and industrious men. A farm of land is to be let ; it is advertised through the parish ; application is to be made, before such a day, to so and so. The day arrives, the agent or the land-steward looks over the proposals, and after singling out the highest bidder, declares him tenant, as a matter of course. Now, perhaps this said tenant does not possess a shilling in the world, nor a shilling's worth. Most likely he is a new-married man, with nothing but his wife's bed and bedding, his wedding-suit, and his blackthorn cudgel, which we may suppose him to keep in reserve for the bailiff. However, he commences his farm ; and then follow the shiftings, the scramblings, and the fruitless struggles to succeed where success is impossible. His farm is not half tilled ; his crops are miserable ; the gale day has already passed, yet he can pay nothing until he takes it out of the land. Perhaps he runs away—makes a moonlight flitting—and, by the aid of his friends, succeeds in bringing the crop with him. The landlord or agent declares he is a knave, forgetting that the man had no other alternative, and that they

were the greater knaves, and fools too, for encouraging him to undertake a task that was beyond his strength.

In calamity we are anxious to derive support from the sympathy of our friends; in our success we are eager to communicate to them the power of participating in our happiness. When Owen once more found himself independent and safe, he longed to realise two plans on which he had some time before been seriously thinking. The first was to visit his former neighbours, that they might at length know that Owen M'Carthy's station in the world was such as became his character. The second was, if possible, to take a farm in his native parish, that he might close his days among the companions of his youth and the friends of his maturer years. He had also another motive: there lay the burying-place of the M'Carthys, in which slept the mouldering dust of his own "golden-haired" Alley. With them—in his daughter's grave—he intended to sleep his long sleep. Affection for the dead is the memory of the heart. In no other graveyard could he reconcile it to himself to be buried; to it had all his forefathers been gathered; and though calamity had separated him from the scenes where they had passed through existence, yet he was resolved that death should not deprive him of its last melancholy consolation—that of reposing with all that remained of the "departed," who had loved him, and whom he had loved. He believed that to neglect this would be to abandon a sacred duty, and felt sorrow at the thought of being like an absent guest from the assembly of *his own* dead; for there is a principle of undying hope in the heart that carries, with bold and beautiful imagery, the realities of life into the silent recesses of death itself.

Having formed the resolution of visiting his old friends at Tubber Derg, he communicated it to Kathleen and his family; his wife received the intelligence with undisguised delight.

"Owen," she replied, "indeed I'm glad you mentioned it. Many a time the thoughts of our place, an' the people about it, comes over me. I know, Owen, it'll go to your heart to see it; but still, avourneen, you'd like, too, to see the ould faces an' the warm hearts of them that pitied us an' helped us, as well as they could, when we war broken down."

"I would, Kathleen; but I'm not goin' merely to see thim an' the place. I intind, if I can, to take a bit of land somewhere near Tubber Derg. I'm unasy in my mind, for fraid I'd not sleep in the graveyard where all belongin' to me lie."

A chord of the mother's heart was touched, and in a moment

the memory of their beloved child brought the tears to her eyes.

"Owen, avourneen, I have one requist to ax of you, and I'm sure you won't refuse it to me. If I die afore you, let me be buried wid Alley. Who has a right to sleep so near her as her own mother?"

"The child's in my heart still," said Owen, suppressing his emotion; "thinkin' of the unfortunate mornin' I wint to Dublin brings her back to me. I see her standin', wid her fair, pale face—pale—oh, my God!—wid hunger an' sickness—her little thin clo'es an' her golden hair tossed about by the dark blast—the tears in her eyes, an' the smile that she once had on her face—houldin' up her mouth, an' sayin', 'Kiss *me* agin, father,' as if she knew, somehow, that I'd never see her, nor her me, any more. An' whin I looked back, as I was turnin' the corner, there she stood, strainin' her eyes after her father, that she was then takin' the last sight of until the judgment day!"

His voice here became broken, and he sat in silence for a few minutes.

"It's sthrange," he added, with more firmness, "how she's so often in my mind."

"But, Owen dear," replied Kathleen, "sure it was the will of God that she should lave us. She's now a bright angel in heaven, an' I dunna if it's right—indeed, I doubt it's sinful—for us to think so much about her. Who knows but her innocent spirit is makin' intercession for us all before the blessed Mother o' God! Who knows but it was her that got us the good fortune that flowed in upon us, an' that made our strugglin' an' our labourin' turn out so *lucky*!"

The idea of being *lucky* or *unlucky* is, in Ireland, an enemy to industry. It is certainly better that the people should believe success in life to be, as it is, the result of virtuous exertion, than of contingent circumstances over which they themselves have no control. Still, there was something beautiful in the superstition of Kathleen's affections—something that touched the heart and its dearest associations.

"It's very true, Kathleen," replied her husband; "but God is ever ready to help them that keeps an honest heart, an' do everything in their power to live creditably. They may fail for a time, or he may thry them for a while, but sooner or later good intintions and honest labour will be rewarded. Look at ourselves—blessed be his name!"

"But whin do you mane to go to Tubber Derg, Owen?"

"In the beginnin' of the next week. An' Kathleen, ahagur,

if you remimber the bitther mornin' we came upon the world—but we'll not be spakin' of that now. I don't like to think of it. Some other time, maybe, when we're settled among our ould friends, I'll mintion it."

"Well, the Lord bliss your endayvours, anyhow! Och, Owen, do thry an' get us a snug farm somewhere near them. But you didn't answer me about Alley, Owen."

"Why, you must have your wish, Kathleen, although I intended to keep that place for myself. Still, we can sleep one on aich side of her; an' that may be asily done, for our buryin' ground is large: so set your mind at rest on that head. I hope God won't call us till we see our childhre settled dacently in the world. But sure, at all evints, let his blessed will be done!"

"Amin! amin! It's not right of any one to keep their hearts fixed too much upon the world; nor even, they say, upon one's own childhre."

"People may love their childhre as much as they plase, Kathleen, if they don't let their *grah* for them spoil the crathurs, by givin' them their own will till they become head-strong an' overbearin'. Now, let my linen be as white as a bone before Monday, plase goodness; I hope by that time that Jack Dogherty will have my new clo'es made; for I intind to go as dacent as ever they seen me in my best days."

"An' so you will too, avillish. Throth, Owen, it's you that'll be the proud man, steppin' in to them in all your grandeur! Ha, ha, ha! The spirit o' the M'Carthys is in you still, Owen."

"Ha, ha, ha! It is, darlin'—it is, indeed; an' I'd be sarry it wasn't. I long to see poor Widow Murray. I dunna is her son Jimmy married. Who knows, afther all we suffered, but I might be able to help her yet?—that is, if she stands in need of it. But I suppose her childhre's grown up now, an' able to assist her. Now, Kathleen, mind Monday next; an' have everything ready. I'll stay away a week or so at the most, an' afther that I'll have news for you about all o' them."

When Monday morning arrived, Owen found himself ready to set out for Tubber Derg. The tailor had not disappointed him; and Kathleen, to do her justice, took care that the proofs of her good housewifery should be apparent in the whiteness of his linen. After breakfast he dressed himself in all his finery; and it would be difficult to say whether the harmless vanity that peeped out occasionally from his simplicity of character, or the open and undisguised triumph of his faithful wife, whose eye rested on him with pride and affection, was most calculated to produce a smile.

"Now, Kathleen," said he, when preparing for his immediate departure, "I'm thinkin' of what they'll say when they see me so smooth an' warm lookin'. I'll engage they'll be axin' one another, 'Musha, how did Owen M'Carthy get an at all, to be so well to do in the world as he appears to be, afther failin' on his ould farm?'"

"Well, but Owen, you know how to manage them."

"Throth, I do that. But there's *one* thing they'll never get out o' me, anyway."

"You won't tell *that* to any o' them, Owen?"

"Kathleen, if I thought they only suspected it, I'd never show my face in Tubber Derg agin. I think I could bear to be—an' yet it ud be a hard struggle wid me too—but I *think* I could bear to be buried among black strangers, rather than it should be said over my grave, among my own, 'There's where Owen M'Carthy lies—who was the only man of his name that ever begged his morsel on the king's highway. There he lies, the descendant of the great M'Carthy Mores, an' yet he was a beggar.' I know, Kathleen achora, it's neither a sin nor a shame to ax one's bit from our fellow-creatures, whin fairly brought to it, widout any fault of our own; but still I feel something in me that can't bear to think of it widout shame an' heaviness of heart."

"Well, it's one comfort that nobody knows it but ourselves. The poor childhre, for their own sakes, won't ever breathe it; so that it's likely the sacret 'll be berrid wid us."

"I hope so, acushla. Does this coat sit asy atween the shoulders? I feel it catch me a little."

"The sorra nicer. There; it was only your waistcoat that was turned down in the collar. Here—hould your arm. There now—it wanted to be pulled down a little at the cuffs. Owen, it's a beauty; an' I think I have good right to be proud out of it, for it's every thread my own spinnin'."

"How do I look in it, Kathleen? Tell me thruth, now."

"Throth, you're twenty years younger; the never a day less."

"I think I needn't be ashamed to go afore my ould friends in it, anyway. Now bring me my staff from undher the bed above, an' in the name o' God I'll set out."

"Which o' them, Owen? Is it the oak or the black-thorn?"

"The oak, acushla. Oh, no; not the blackthorn. It's it that I brought to Dublin wid me, the unlucky thief, an' that I had while we wor a *shaughran*. Divil a one o' me but ud blush in the face if I brought it even in my hand afore them. The oak,

ahagur; the oak. You'll get it atween the foot o' the bed an' the wall."

When Kathleen placed the staff in his hand, he took off his hat and blessed himself, then put it on, looked at his wife, and said: "Now, darlin', in the name o' God, I'll go. Husht, avillish machree, don't be cryin'; sure I'll be back to you in a week."

"Och! I can't help it, Owen. Sure this is the second time you war ever away from me more nor a day; an' I'm thinkin' of what happened both to you an' me the *first* time you wint. Owen, acushla, I feel that if anything happened you, I'd break my heart."

"Arrah, what ud happen me, darlin', wid God to protect me? Now, God be wid you, Kathleen dheelish, till I come back to you wid good news, I hope. I'm not goin' in sickness an' misery, as I wint afore, to see a man that wouldn't hear my appale to him; an' I'm lavin' you comfortable, agrah, an' wantin' for nothin'. Sure it's only about five-an'-twenty miles from this—a mere step. The good God bless an' take care of you, my darlin' wife, till I come home to you!"

He kissed the tears that streamed from her eyes; and, hemming several times, pressed her hand, his face rather averted, then grasped his staff, and commenced his journey.

Scenes like this were important events to our humble couple. Life, when untainted by the crimes and artificial manners which destroy its purity, is a beautiful thing to contemplate among the virtuous poor; and where the current of affection runs deep and smooth, the slightest incident will agitate it. So was it with Owen M'Carthy and his wife. Simplicity, truth, and affection constituted their character. In them there was no complication of incongruous elements. The order of their virtues was not broken, nor the purity of their affections violated, by the anomalous blending together of opposing principles, such as are to be found in those who are involuntarily contaminated by the corruption of human society.

Owen had not gone far when Kathleen called to him, "Owen, ahagur—stand, darlin'; but don't come back a step, for fraid o' bad luck."¹

"Did I forget anything, Kathleen?" he inquired. "Let me see: no; sure I have my beads an' my tobaccy-box, an' my

¹ When an Irish peasant sets out on a journey, or to transact business in a fair or market, he will not, if possible, turn back. It is considered unlucky; as it is also to be crossed by a hare, or met by a red-haired woman.

two clane shirts an' hankerchers in the bundle. What is it, acushla?"

"I needn't be axin' you, for I know you wouldn't forget it; but for fraid you might, Owen, whin you're at Tubber Derg, go to little Alley's grave, an' look at it; an' bring me back word how it appears. You might get it cleaned up, if there's weeds or anything growin' upon it; and, Owen, would you bring me a bit o' the clay, tied up in your pocket? Whin you're there spake to her; tell her it was the lovin' mother that bid you, an' say anything that you'd think might keep her asy an' give her pleasure. Tell her we're not now as we wor whin she was wid us; that we don't feel hunger, nor cowl'd, nor want; an' that nothin' is a throuble to us, barrin' that we miss *her*—ay, even yet—a *suillish machree*¹ that she was—that we miss her fair face an' goolden head from among us. Tell her this; an' tell her it was the lovin' mother that said it, an' that sint the message to her."

"I'll do it all, Kathleen; I'll do it all—all. An' now go in, darlin', an' don't be frettin'. Maybe we'll soon be near her, plase God, where we can see the place she sleeps in often."

They then separated again; and Owen, considerably affected by the maternal tenderness of his wife, proceeded on his journey. He had not actually, even at the period of his leaving home, been able to determine on what particular friend he should first call. That his welcome would be hospitable, nay, enthusiastically so, he was certain. In the meantime he vigorously pursued his journey; and partook neither of refreshment nor rest until he arrived, a little after dusk, at a turn of the well-known road, which, had it been daylight, would have opened to him a view of Tubber Derg. He looked towards the beeches, however, under which it stood; but to gain a sight of it was impossible. His road now lying a little to the right, he turned to the house of his sterling friend, Frank Farrell, who had given him and his family shelter and support when he was driven, without remorse, from his own holding. In a short time he reached Frank's residence, and felt a glow of sincere satisfaction at finding the same air of comfort and warmth about it as formerly. Through the kitchen window he saw the strong light of the blazing fire, and heard, ere he presented himself, the loud hearty laugh of his friend's wife, precisely as light and animated as it had been fifteen years before.

Owen lifted the latch and entered, with that fluttering of the

¹ Light of my heart.

pulse which every man feels on meeting with a friend after an interval of many years.

"Musha, good people, can yees tell me is Frank Farrell at home?"

"Why, thin, he's not jist widin now, but he'll be here in no time entirely," replied one of his daughters. "Won't you sit down, honest man, an' we'll sind for him?"

"I'm thankful to you," said Owen. "I'll sit, sure enough, till he comes in."

"Why, thin!—eh! it must—it *can* be no other!" exclaimed Farrell's wife, bringing over a candle and looking Owen earnestly in the face; "sure, I'd know that voice all the world over! Why, thin, marcfiful Father—Owen M'Carthy—Owen M'Carthy, is it your four quarthers that's livin' an' well? Queen o' heaven, Owen M'Carthy, darlin', you're welcome!" the word was here interrupted by a hearty kiss from the kind housewife—"welcome a thousand an' a thousand times! *Vick na hoiah!* Owen, dear, an' are you livin' at all? An' Kathleen, Owen, an' the childhre, an' all of yees—an' how are they?"

"Throth, we're livin' an' well, Bridget; never was betther, thanks be to God an' you, in our lives."

Owen was now surrounded by such of Farrell's children as were old enough to remember him, every one of whom he shook hands with and kissed.

"Why, thin, the Lord save my sowl, Bridget," said he, "are these the little bouchaleens an' colleens that were runnin' about my feet whin I was here afore? Well to be sure! how they do shoot up! An' is this Atty?"

"No; but *this* is Atty, Owen; faix, Brian outgrew him; an' here's Mary, an' this is Bridget Oge."

"Well!—well! But where did these two young shoots come from, this boy an' the colleen here? They worn't to the fore in *my* time, Bridget."

"This is Owen, called afther yourself—an' this is Kathleen. I needn't tell you who she was called afther."

"*Gutsho, alanna? thurm pogue?*—come here, child, and kiss me," said Owen to his little namesake; "an' sure I can't forget the little woman here; *gutsho*, a colleen, and kiss me too."

Owen took her on his knee and kissed her twice.

"Och, but poor Kathleen," said he, "will be the proud woman of this when she hears it; in throth she will be that."

"Arrah! what's comin' over me?" said Mrs. Farrell. "Brian, run up to Micky Lowrie's for your father. An' see, Brian, don't say who's wantin' him till we give him a start.

Mary, come here, acushla," she added to her eldest daughter in a whisper—"take these two bottles, an' fly up to Peggy Finigan's for the full o' them o' whisky. Now be back before you're there, or if you don't, that I mightn't, but you'll see what you'll get. Fly, aroon, an' don't let the grass grow undher your feet. An' Owen, darlin'—but first sit over to the fire—here, get over to this side, it's the snuggest; arrah, Owen—an' sure I dunna what to ax you first. You're all well? all to the fore?"

"All well, Bridget, an' thanks be to heaven, all to the fore."

"Glory be to God! Throth, it warms my heart to hear it. An' the childhre's all up finely, boys an' girls?"

"Throth, they are, Bridget, as good-lookin' a family o' childhre as you'd wish to see. An' what is betther, they're as good as they're good-lookin'."

"Throth, they couldn't but be that if they tuck at all afther their father an' mother. Bridget, aroon, rub the pan betther—an' lay the knife down, I'll cut the bacon myself, but go an' get a dozen o' the freshest eggs. An' Kathleen, Owen, how does poor Kathleen look? Does she stand it as well as yourself?"

"As young as ever you seen her. God help her! a thousand degrees betther now nor when you seen her last."

"An' well to do, Owen?—now tell the truth! Och, musha, I forget who I'm spakin' to, or I wouldn't disremember the ould sayin' that's abroad this many a year:—Who ever knew a M'Carthy of Tubber Derg to tell a lie, break his word, or refuse to help a friend in distress? But, Owen, you're well to do in the world?"

"We're as well, Bridget, or may be betther, nor you ever knew us, except, indeed, afore the ould lase was run out wid us."

"God be praised agin! Musha, turn round a little, Owen, for fraid Frank ud get too clear a sight of your face at first. Arrah, do you think he'll know you? Och, to be sure he will; I needn't ax. Your voice would tell upon you, any day."

"Know me! Indeed, Frank ud know my shadow. He'll know me wid half a look."

And Owen was right, for quickly did the eye of his old friend recognise him, despite of the little plot that was laid to try his penetration. To describe their interview would be to repeat the scene we have already attempted to depict between Owen and Mrs. Farrell. No sooner were the rites of hospitality performed than the tide of conversation began to flow with greater freedom. Owen ascertained one important fact, which we will here mention, because it produces in a great degree the want of anything

like an independent class of yeomanry in the country. On inquiring after his old acquaintances, he discovered that a great number of them, owing to high rents, had emigrated to America. They belonged to that class of independent farmers who, after the expiration of their old leases, finding the little capital which they had saved beginning to diminish in consequence of rents which they could not pay, deemed it more prudent, while anything remained in their hands, to seek a country where capital and industry might be made available. Thus did the landlords, by their mismanagement and neglect, absolutely drive off their estates the only men who, if properly encouraged, were capable of becoming the strength and pride of the country. It is this system, joined to the curse of middlemen and subletting, which has left the country without any third grade of decent, substantial yeomen, who might stand as a bond of peace between the highest and the lowest classes. It is this which has split the kingdom into two divisions, constituting the extreme ends of society—the wealthy and the wretched. If this third class existed, Ireland would neither be so political nor discontented as she is; but, on the contrary, more remarkable for peace and industry. At present, the lower classes, being too poor, are easily excited by those who promise them a better order of things than that which exists. These theorists step into the exercise of that legitimate influence which the landed proprietors have lost by their neglect. There is no middle class in the country who can turn round to them and say, “Our circumstances are easy, we want nothing; carry your promises to the poor, for that which you hold forth to *their* hopes *we* enjoy in reality.” The poor soldier who, because he was wretched, volunteered to go on the forlorn hope made a fortune; but when asked if he would go on a second enterprise of a similar kind, shrewdly replied, “General, I am *now* an independent man; send some *poor* devil on your forlorn hope who wants to make a fortune.”

Owen now heard anecdotes and narratives of all occurrences, whether interesting or strange, that had taken place during his absence. Among others was the death of his former landlord, and the removal of the agent who had driven him to beggary. Tubber Derg, he found, was then the property of a humane and considerate man, who employed a judicious and benevolent gentleman to manage it.

“One thing I can tell you,” said Frank: “it was but a short time in the new agent’s hands when the dacent farmers stopped goin’ to America.”

"But, Frank," said Owen, and he sighed on putting the question, "who is in Tubber Derg now?"

"Why, thin, a son of ould Rousin' Redhead's, of Tullyvernon—young Con Roe, or the Ace o' Hearts—for he was called both by the youngsters—if you remimber him. His head's as red, an' double as big even, as his father's was, an' you know that no hat would fit ould Con until he sent his measure to Jimmy Lamb, the hatter. Dick Nugent put it out on him that Jimmy always made Rousin' Redhead's hat either upon the half-bushel pot or a five gallon keg of whisky. 'Talkin' of the keg,' says Dick, 'for the matther o' that,' says he, 'divil a much differ the hat will persave; for the one'—meaning ould Con's head, who was a hard drinker—'the one,' says Dick, 'is as much a keg as the other—ha! ha! ha!' Dick met Rousin' Redhead another day. 'Arrah, Con,' says he, 'why do you get your hats made upon a *pot*, man alive? Sure that's the rason that you're so fond o' *poteen*.' A quare mad crathur was Dick, an' would go forty miles for a fight. Poor fellow, he got his skull broke in a skrimmage betwixt the Redmonds and the O'Hanlons; an' his last words were, 'Bad luck to you, Redmond—O'Hanlon, I never thought *you*, above all men, dead an' gone, would be the death o' me.' Poor fellow! he was for pacifyin' them, for a wondher; but instead o' that, he got pacified himself."

"An' how is young Con doin', Frank?"

"Hut, divil a much time he has to do aither well or ill yit. There was four tenants on Tubber Derg since you left it, an' he's the fifth. It's hard to say how he'll do; but I believe he's the best o' thim for so far. That may be owin' to the landlord. The rent's let down to him; an' I think he'll be able to take bread, an' good bread too, out of it."

"God send, poor man!"

"Now, Owen, would you like to go back to it?"

"I can't say that. I love the place, *but I suffered too much in it*. No; but I'll tell you, Frank, if there was e'er a snug farm near it that I could get rasonable, I'd take it."

Frank slapped his knee exultingly. "*Ma chuirp?*—do you say so, Owen?"

"Indeed I do."

"Thin, upon my song, that's the luckiest thing I ever knew. There's this blessed minute a farm o' sixteen acres that the Lacys is lavin'—goin' to America—an' it's to be set. They'll go the week afther next, an' the house needn't be cowl'd, for you can come to it the very day afther they lave it."

"Well," said Owen, "I'm glad of that. Will you come wid me to-morrow, an' we'll see about it?"

"To be sure I will; an' what's betther, too, the agint is a son of ould Misther Rogerson's, a man that knows you an' the history o' them you came from well. An' another thing, Owen! I tell you, whin it's abroad that *you* want to take the farm, there's not a man in the parish would bid agin you. You may know that yourself."

"I think, indeed, they would rather serve me than otherwise," replied Owen; "an' in the name o' God, we'll see what can be done. Misther Rogerson himself ud spake to his son for me, so that I'll be sure of his intherest. Arrah, Frank, how is an ould frind o' mine, that I have a great regard for—poor Widow Murray?"

"Widow Murray! Poor woman, *she's* happy."

"You don't mane *she's* dead?"

"*She's* dead, Owen, and happy, I trust, in the Saviour. *She* died last spring was a two years."

"God be good to her sowl! An' are the childhre in her place still? It's *she* that was the dacent woman."

"Throth, they are; an' sorrow a betther doin' family in the parish than they are. It's they that'll be glad to see you, Owen. Many a time I seen their poor mother, heavens be her bed, lettin' down the tears whin she used to be spakin' of you, or mintionin' how often you sarved her; espishially about some day or other that you previnted her cows from bein' canted for the rint. *She's* dead now, an' God he knows an honest, hard-workin' woman *she* ever was."

"Dear me, Frank, isn't it a wondher to think how the people dhrop off! There's Widow Murray, one o' my ouldest frinds, an' Pether M'Mahon, an' Barny Lorinan—not to forget pleasant Rousin' Redhead—all taken away! Well!—well! Sure it's the will o' God! We can't be here always."

After much conversation, enlivened by the bottle, though but sparingly used on the part of Owen, the hour of rest arrived, when the family separated for the night.

The grey dawn of a calm, beautiful summer's morning found Owen up and abroad long before the family of honest Frank had risen. When dressing himself, with an intention of taking an early walk, he was asked by his friend why he stirred so soon, or if he—his host—should accompany him.

"No," replied Owen; "lie still; jist let me look over the country while it's asleep. Whin I'm musin' this a-way I don't like anybody to be along wid me. I have a place to go an' see,

too—an' a message—a tendher message, from poor Kathleen, to deliver, that I wouldn't wish a second person to hear. Sleep, Frank. I'll jist crush the head o' my pipe agin one o' the half-burned turf that the fire was raked wid, an' walk out for an hour or two. Afther our breakfast we'll go an' look about this new farm."

He sallied out as he spoke, and closed the door after him in that quiet, thoughtful way for which he was ever remarkable. The season was midsummer, and the morning wanted at least an hour of sunrise. Owen ascended a little knoll above Frank's house, on which he stood and surveyed the surrounding country with a pleasing but melancholy interest. As his eye rested on Tubber Derg, he felt the difference strongly between the imperishable glories of nature's works and those which are executed by man. His house he would not have known, except by its site. It was not, in fact, the same house, but another which had been built in its stead. This disappointed and vexed him. An object on which his affections had been placed was removed. A rude stone house stood before him, rough and unplastered, against each end of which was built a stable and cow-house, sloping down from the gables to low doors at both sides; adjoining these rose two mounds of filth, large enough to be easily distinguished from the knoll on which he stood. He sighed as he contrasted it with the neat and beautiful farm-house which shone there in his happy days, white as a lily, beneath the covering of the lofty beeches. There was no air of comfort, neatness, or independence about it; on the contrary, everything betrayed the evidence of struggle and difficulty, joined, probably, to want both of skill and of capital. He was disappointed, and turned his gaze upon the general aspect of the country, and the houses in which either his old acquaintances or their children lived. The features of the landscape were certainly the same; but even here was a change for the worse. The warmth of colouring which wealth and independence give to the appearance of a cultivated country was gone. Decay and coldness seemed to brood upon everything he saw. The houses, the farmyards, the ditches, and enclosures were all marked by the blasting proofs of national decline. Some exceptions there were to this disheartening prospect; but they were only sufficient to render the torn and ragged evidences of poverty and its attendant—carelessness—more conspicuous. He left the knoll, knocked the ashes out of his pipe, and, putting it into his waistcoat pocket, ascended a larger hill, which led to the graveyard where his child lay buried. On his way to this hill, which stood about half a mile

distant, he passed a few houses of a humble description, with whose inhabitants he had been well acquainted. Some of these stood nearly as he remembered them; but others were roofless, with their dark mud gables either fallen in or partially broken down. He surveyed their smoke-coloured walls with sorrow; and looked, with a sense of the transient character of all man's works, upon the chickweed, docks, and nettles which had shot up so rankly on the spot where many a chequered scene of joy and sorrow had flitted over the circumscribed circle of humble life, ere the annihilating wing of ruin swept away them and their habitations.

When he had ascended the hill his eye took a wider range. The more distant and picturesque part of the country lay before him. "Ay!" said he, in a soliloquy, "Lord bless us, how strange is this world!—an' what poor crathurs are men! There's the dark mountains, the hills, the rivers, an' the green glens, all the same; an' nothin' else a'most but's changed! The very song of that blackbird in thim thorn-bushes an' hazels below me is like the voice of an ould friend to my ears. Och, indeed, hardly that, for even the voice of man changes; but that song is the same as I heard it for the best part o' my life. That mornin' star, too, is the same bright crathur up there that it ever was! God help us! Hardly anything changes but man, an' he seems to think that he can never change, if one is to judge by his thoughtlessness, folly, an' wickedness!"

A smaller hill, around the base of which went the same imperfect road that crossed the glen of Tubber Derg, prevented him from seeing the graveyard to which he was about to extend his walk. To this road he directed his steps. On reaching it he looked, still with a strong memory of former times, to the glen in which his children, himself, and his ancestors had all, during their day, played in the happy thoughtlessness of childhood and youth. But the dark and ragged house jarred upon his feelings. He turned from it with pain, and his eyes rested upon the still green valley with evident relief. He thought of his "buried flower"—"his goolden-haired darlin'," as he used to call her—and almost fancied that he saw her once more wandering waywardly through its tangled mazes, gathering berries, or strolling along the green meadow with a garland of gowans about her neck. Imagination, indeed, cannot heighten the image of the dead whom we love; but even if it could, there was no standard of ideal beauty in her father's mind beyond that of her own. She had been beautiful, but her beauty was pensive; a fair yet melancholy child; for the

charm that ever encompassed her was one of sorrow and tenderness. Had she been volatile and mirthful, as children usually are, he would not have carried so far into his future life the love of her which he cherished. Another reason why he still loved her strongly was a consciousness that her death had been occasioned by distress and misery; for, as he said, when looking upon the scenes of her brief but melancholy existence—"Avouineen machree, I remember to see you pickin' the berries; but asthore—asthore—it wasn't for play you did it; it was to keep away the cuttin' of hunger from your heart! Of all our childhre every one said that *you* wor the M'Carthy—never sayin' much, but the heart in you ever full of goodness an' affection. God help me, I'm glad—an' now that I'm comin' near it, loth—to see her grave."

He had now reached the verge of the graveyard. Its fine old ruin stood there as usual, but not altogether without the symptoms of change. Some persons had for the purposes of building, thrown down one of its most picturesque walls. Still its ruins clothed with ivy, its mullions moss-covered, its Gothic arches and tracery grey with age, were the same in appearance as he had ever seen them.

On entering this silent palace of death he reverently uncovered his head, blessed himself, and, with feelings deeply agitated, sought the grave of his beloved child. He approached it; but a sudden transition from sorrow to indignation took place in his mind, even before he reached the spot on which she lay. "Sacred Mother!" he exclaimed, "who has dared to bury in our ground? Who has—what villain has attempted to come in upon the M'Carthys—upon the M'Carthy Mores, of Tubber Derg? Who could—had I no friend to prev—eh? Sacred Mother, what's this? Father of Heaven, forgive me! Forgive me, sweet Saviour, for this bad feelin' I got into! Who—who—could raise a headstone over the darlin' o' my heart widout one of us knowin' it? Who—who could do it? But let me see if I can make it out. Oh, who could do this blessed thing for the poor an' the sorrowful?" He began, and with difficulty read as follows:—

"Here lies the body of Alice M'Carthy, the beloved daughter of Owen and Kathleen M'Carthy, aged nine years. She was descended from the M'Carthy Mores.

"Requiescat in pace.

"This headstone was raised over her by Widow Murray and her

son, James Murray, out of grateful respect for Owen and Kathleen M'Carthy, who never suffered the widow and orphan, or a distressed neighbour, to crave assistance from them in vain, until it pleased God to visit them with affliction."

"Thanks to you, my Saviour!" said Owen, dropping on his knees over the grave. "Thanks an' praise be to your holy name, that in the middle of my poverty—of all my poverty—I was not forgotten! nor my darlin' child let to lie widout honour in the grave of her family! Make me worthy, blessed Heaven, of what is written down upon me here! An' if the departed spirit of her that honoured the dust of my buried daughter is unhappy, oh, let her be relieved, an' let this act be remimbered to her! Bless her son, too, gracious Father, an' all belongin' to her on this earth! an', if it be your holy will, let them never know distress, or poverty, or wickedness!"

He then offered up a Pater-Noster for the repose of his child's soul, and another for the kind-hearted and grateful Widow Murray, after which he stood to examine the grave with greater accuracy.

There was, in fact, no grave visible. The little mound, under which lay what was once such a touching image of innocence, beauty, and feeling, had sunk down to the level of the earth about it. He regretted this, inasmuch as it took away, he thought, part of her individuality. Still he knew it was the spot wherein she had been buried, and with much of that vivid feeling, and strong figurative language, inseparable from the habits of thought and language of the old Irish families, he delivered the mother's message to the inanimate dust of her once beautiful and heart-loved child. He spoke in a broken voice, for even the mention of her name aloud, over the clay that contained her, struck with a fresh burst of sorrow upon his heart.

"Alley," he exclaimed, in Irish, "*Alley, nhien machree*, your father, that loved *you* more nor he loved any other human crathur, brings a message to you from the mother of your heart, avourneen! She bid me call to see the spot where you're lyin', my buried flower, an' to tell you that we're not now, thanks be to God, as we wor whin you lived wid us. We are well to do now, *acushla oge machree*, an' not in hunger, an' sickness, an' misery, as we wor whin you suffered them all! You will love to hear this, pulse of our hearts, an' to know that, through all we suffered—an' bittherly we did suffer since you departed—we never let you out of our memory. No, *asthore villish*, we thought of you, an' cried afther our poor dead flower, many and many's the

time. An' she bid me tell you, darlin' of my heart, that we feel nothin' now so much as that you are not wid us to share our comfort an' our happiness. Oh, what wouldn't the mother give to have you back wid her; but it can't be—an' what wouldn't I give to have you before my eyes agin, in health an' in life—but it can't be. The lovin' mother sent this message to you, Alley. Take it from her; she bid me tell you that we are well an' happy; our name is pure, and, like yourself, widout spot or stain. Won't you pray for us before God, an' get him an' his blessed Mother to look on us wid favour and compassion? Farewell, Alley, asthore! May you sleep in peace, an' rest on the breast of your great Father in heaven, until we all meet in happiness together. It's your father that's spakin' to you, our lost flower; an' the hand that often smoothed your goolden head is now upon your grave."

He wiped his eyes as he concluded, and after lifting a little of the clay from her grave, he tied it carefully up and put it into his pocket.

Having left the graveyard, he retraced his steps towards Frank Farrell's house. The sun had now risen, and as Owen ascended the larger of the two hills which we have mentioned, he stood again to view the scene that stretched beneath him. About an hour before all was still; the whole country lay motionless, as if the land had been a land of the dead. The mountains in the distance were covered with the thin mists of morning; the milder and richer parts of the landscape had appeared in that dim grey distinctness which gives to distant objects such a clear outline. With the exception of the black-bird's song, everything seemed as if stricken into silence; there was not a breeze stirring; both animate and inanimate nature reposed as if in a trance; the very trees appeared asleep, and their leaves motionless, as if they had been of marble. But now the scene was changed. The sun had flung his splendour upon the mountain-tops, from which the mists were tumbling in broken fragments to the valleys between them. A thousand birds poured their songs upon the ear; the breeze was up, and the columns of smoke from the farm-houses and cottages played, as if in frolic, in the air. A white haze was beginning to rise from the meadows, early teams were afoot, and labourers going abroad to their employment. The lakes in the distance shone like mirrors, and the clear springs on the mountain sides glittered in the sun like gems on which the eye could scarcely rest. Life and light and motion appear to be inseparable. The dew of morning lay upon nature like

a brilliant veil, realising the beautiful image of Horace, as applied to woman—

“Vultus nimium lubricus aspicit.”

By-and-by the songs of the early workmen were heard ; nature had awoke ; and Owen, whose heart was strongly, though unconsciously, alive to the influence of natural religion, participated in the general elevation of the hour, and sought with freshened spirits the house of his entertainer.

As he entered this hospitable roof, the early industry of his friend's wife presented him with a well-swept hearth and a pleasant fire, before which had been placed the identical chair that they had appropriated to his own use. Frank was enjoying “a blast o' the pipe,” after having risen, to which luxury the return of Owen gave additional zest and placidity. In fact, Owen's presence communicated a holiday spirit to the family—a spirit, too, which declined not for a moment during the period of his visit.

“Frank,” said Owen, “to tell you the thruth, I'm not half plased wid you this mornin' ! I think you didn't thrate me as I ought to expect to be thrated.”

“Musha, Owen M'Carthy, how is that ?”

“Why, you said nothin' about Widow Murray raisin' a headstone over our child. You kep' me in the dark there, Frank, an' sich a start I never got as I did this mornin' in the graveyard beyant.”

“Upon my sowl, Owen, it wasn't my fau't, nor any of our fau'ts ; for, to tell you the thruth, we had so much to think and discoorse of last night that it never sthruck me, good or bad. Indeed, it was Bridget that put it first in my head, afther you wint out, an' thin it was too late. Ay, poor woman, the dacent strain was ever in her, the heavens be her bed !”

“Frank, if any one of her family was to abuse me till the dogs wouldn't lick my blood, I'd only give them back good for evil afther that. Oh, Frank, that goes to my heart ! To put a headstone over my weeny goolden-haired darlin', for the sake of the little thrifles I sarved thim in ! Well !—may none belonging to her ever know poverty or hardship ! but if they do, an' that I have it—How-an'-iver, no matther. God bless thim ! Wait till Kathleen hears it !”

“An' the best of it was, Owen, that she never expected to see one of your faces. But, Owen, you think too much about that

child. Let us talk of something else. You seen Tubber Derg wanst more."

"I did ; an' I love it still, in spite of the state it's in."

"Ah ! it's different from what it was in your happy days. I was spakin' to Bridget about the farm, an' she advises us to go, widout losin' a minute, an' take it if we can."

"It's near this place I'll die, Frank. I'd not rest in my grave if I wasn't berrid among my own ; so we'll take the farm if possible."

"Well, then, Bridget, hurry the breakfast, avourneen ; an' in the name o' goodness, we'll set out, an' clinch the business this very day."

Owen, as we said, was prompt in following up his determinations. After breakfast they saw the agent and his father, for both lived together. Old Rogerson had been intimately acquainted with the M'Carthys, and, as Frank had anticipated, used his influence with the agent in procuring for the son of his old friend and acquaintance the farm which he sought.

"Jack," said the old gentleman, "you don't probably know the history and character of the Tubber Derg M'Carthys so well as I do. No man ever required the written bond of a M'Carthy ; and it was said of them, and is said still, that the widow and orphan, the poor man or the stranger, never sought their assistance in vain. I myself will go security, if necessary, for Owen M'Carthy."

"Sir," replied Owen, "I'm thankful to you ; I'm grateful to you. But I wouldn't take the farm, or bid for it at all, unless I could bring forrid enough to stock it as I wish, an' to lay in all that's wantin' to work it well. It ud be useless for me to take it—to struggle a year or two—impoverish the land—an' thin run away out of it. No, no ; I have what'll put me upon it wid dacency an' comfort."

"Then, since my father has taken such an interest in you, M'Carthy, you must have the farm. We shall get leases prepared, and the business completed, in a few days ; for I go to Dublin on this day week. Father, I now remember the character of this family ; and I remember, too, the sympathy which was felt for one of them who was harshly ejected, about seventeen or eighteen years ago, out of the lands on which his forefathers had lived, I understand, for centuries."

"I am that man, sir," returned Owen. "It's too long a story to tell now ; but it was only out o' *part* of the lands, sir, that I was put. What I held was but a poor patch compared to what

the family held in my grandfather's time. A great part of it went out of our hands at his death."

"It was very kind of you, Misther Rogerson, to offer to go security for him," said Frank; "but if security was wantin', sir, I'd not be willin' to let anybody but myself back him. I'd go all I'm worth in the world—an', be my sowl, double as much—for the same man."

"I know that, Frank, an' I thank you; but I could put security in Mr. Rogerson's hands here, if it was wanted. Good mornin', an' thank you both, gentlemen. To tell yees the thruth," he added, with a smile, "I long to be among my ould friends—manin' the people, an' the hills, an' the green fields of Tubber Derg—agin; an', thanks be to goodness, sure I will soon."

In fact, wherever Owen went, within the bounds of his native parish, his name, to use a significant phrase of the people, was before him. His arrival at Frank Farrell's was now generally known by all his acquaintances, and the numbers who came to see him were almost beyond belief. During the two or three successive days he went among his old "*croniens*"; and no sooner was his arrival at any particular house intimated than the neighbours all flocked to him. Scythes were left idle, spades were stuck in the earth, and work neglected for the time being; all crowded about him with a warm and friendly interest, not proceeding from idle curiosity, but from affection and respect for the man.

The interview between him and Widow Murray's children was affecting. Owen felt deeply the delicate and touching manner in which they had evinced their gratitude for the services he had rendered them; and young Murray remembered, with a strong gush of feeling, the distresses under which they lay when Owen had assisted them. Their circumstances, owing to the strenuous exertions of the widow's eldest son, soon afterwards improved; and, in accordance with the sentiments of hearts naturally grateful, they had taken that method of testifying what they felt. Indeed, so well had Owen's unparalleled affection for his favourite child been known that it was the general opinion about Tubber Derg that her death had broken his heart.

"Poor Owen! he's dead," they used to say; "the death of his weeny one, while he was away in Dublin, gave him the finishin' blow. It broke his heart."

Before the week was expired Owen had the satisfaction of depositing the lease of his new farm, held at a moderate rent, in the hands of Frank Farrell, who, tying it up along with his

own, secured it in "the black chest." Nothing remained now but to return home forthwith, and communicate the intelligence to Kathleen. Frank had promised, as soon as the Lacys should vacate the house, to come with a long train of cars and a number of his neighbours, in order to transfer Owen's family and furniture to his new dwelling. Everything, therefore, had been arranged, and Owen had nothing to do but hold himself in readiness for the welcome arrival of Frank and his friends.

Owen, however, had no sense of enjoyment when not participated in by his beloved Kathleen. If he felt sorrow, it was less as a personal feeling than as a calamity to her. If he experienced happiness, it was doubly sweet to him as reflected from his Kathleen. All this was mutual between them. Kathleen loved Owen precisely as he loved Kathleen. Nor let our readers suppose that such characters are not in humble life. It is in humble life, where the springs of feeling are not corrupted by dissimulation and evil knowledge, that the purest and tenderest and strongest virtues are to be found.

As Owen approached his home he could not avoid contrasting the circumstances of his return *now* with those under which, almost broken-hearted after his journey to Dublin, he presented himself to his sorrowing and bereaved wife about sixteen years before. He raised his hat, and thanked God for the success which had since that period attended him; and immediately after his silent thanksgiving entered the house.

His welcome, our readers may be assured, was tender and affectionate. The whole family gathered about him, and on his informing them that they were once more about to reside on a farm adjoining to their beloved Tubber Derg, Kathleen's countenance brightened, and the tear of delight gushed to her eyes.

"God be praised, Owen!" she exclaimed; "we will have the ould place afore our eyes, an', what is betther, we will be near where Alley is lyin'. But that's true, Owen," she added, "did you give the light of our hearts the mother's message?"

Owen paused, and his features were slightly overshadowed, but only by the solemnity of the feeling.

"Kathleen," said he, "I gave her your message; but, avourneen, I have strhange news for you about Alley."

"What, Owen? What is it, acushla? Tell me quick!"

"The blessed child was not neglected; no, but she was honoured in our absence. A headstone was put over her, an' stands there purtily this minute."

"Mother of glory, Owen!"

"It's thruth. Widow Murray an' her son Jimmy put it up, with words upon it that brought the tears to my eyes. Widow Murray is dead, but her childhre's doin' well. May God bless an' prosper them, an' make her happy!"

The delighted mother's heart was not proof against the widow's gratitude, expressed, as it had been, in a manner so affecting. She rocked herself to and fro in silence, whilst the tears fell in showers down her cheeks. The grief, however, which this affectionate couple felt for their child was not always such as the reader has perceived it to be. It was rather a revival of emotions that had long slumbered, but never died; and the associations arising from the journey to Tubber Derg had thrown them back, by the force of memory, almost to the period of her death. At times, indeed, their imagination had conjured her up strongly; but the present was an epoch in the history of their sorrow.

There is little more to be said. Sorrow was soon succeeded by cheerfulness and the glow of expected pleasure, which is ever the more delightful as the pleasure is pure. In about a week their old neighbours, with their carts and cars, arrived; and before the day was closed on which Owen removed to his new residence, he found himself once more sitting at his own hearth, among the friends of his youth and the companions of his maturer years. Ere the twelvemonth elapsed he had his house perfectly white, and as nearly resembling that of Tubber Derg in its better days as possible. About two years ago we saw him one evening in the month of June, as he sat on a bench beside his door, singing with a happy heart his favourite song of "*Colleen dhas crootha na mo.*" It was about an hour before sunset. The house stood on a gentle eminence, beneath which a sweep of green meadow stretched away to the skirts of Tubber Derg. Around him was a country naturally fertile, and, in spite of the national depression, still beautiful to contemplate. Kathleen and two servant-maids were milking, and the whole family were assembled about the door.

"Well, childhre," said the father, "didn't I tell yees, the bitther mornin' we left Tubber Derg, not to cry or be disheartened—that 'there was a good God above, who might do somethin' for us *yet?*' I never *did* give up my trust in him, an' I never *will*. You see, afther all our little troubles, he has wanst more brought us together, an' made us happy. Praise an' glory to his name!"

I looked at him as he spoke. He had raised his eyes to heaven, and a gleam of elevated devotion, perhaps worthy of

being called sublime, irradiated his features. The sun, too, in setting, fell upon his broad temples and iron-grey locks with a light solemn and religious. The effect to me, who knew his noble character, and all that he had suffered, was as if the eye of God then rested upon the decline of a virtuous man's life with approbation; as if he had lifted up the glory of his countenance upon him. Would that many of his thoughtless countrymen had been present! They might have blushed for their crimes, and been content to sit and learn wisdom at the feet of Owen M'Carthy.

WILDGOOSE LODGE.

* * * * *

I HAD read the anonymous summons, but, from its general import, I believed it to be one of those special meetings convened for some purpose affecting the usual objects and proceedings of the body ; at least, the terms in which it was conveyed to me had nothing extraordinary or mysterious in them beyond the simple fact that it was not to be a general but a select meeting. This mark of confidence flattered me, and I determined to attend punctually. I was, it is true, desired to keep the circumstance entirely to myself ; but there was nothing startling in this, for I had often received summonses of a similar nature. I therefore resolved to attend, according to the letter of my instructions, "on the next night, at the solemn hour of midnight, to deliberate and act upon such matters as should then and there be submitted to my consideration." The morning after I received this message I arose and resumed my usual occupations ; but, from whatever cause it may have proceeded, I felt a sense of approaching evil hang heavily upon me : the beats of my pulse were languid, and an undefinable feeling of anxiety pervaded my whole spirit ; even my face was pale, and my eye so heavy that my father and brothers concluded me to be ill—an opinion which I thought at the time to be correct, for I felt exactly that kind of depression which precedes a severe fever. I could not understand what I experienced, nor can I yet, except by supposing that there is in human nature some mysterious faculty by which, in coming calamities, the dread of some fearful evil is anticipated, and that it is possible to catch a dark presentiment of the sensations which they subsequently produce. For my part, I can neither analyse nor define it ; but on that day I knew it by painful experience, and so have a thousand others in similar circumstances.

It was about the middle of winter. The day was gloomy and tempestuous almost beyond any other I remember. Dark clouds rolled over the hills about me, and a close, sleet-like rain fell in slanting drifts that chased each other rapidly towards the earth

on the course of the blast. The outlying cattle sought the closest and calmest corners of the fields for shelter; the trees and young groves were tossed about, for the wind was so unusually high that it swept in hollow gusts through them with that hoarse murmur which deepens so powerfully on the mind the sense of dreariness and desolation.

As the shades of night fell, the storm, if possible, increased. The moon was half gone, and only a few stars were visible by glimpses, as a rush of wind left a temporary opening in the sky. I had determined, if the storm should not abate, to incur any penalty rather than attend the meeting; but the appointed hour was distant, and I resolved to be decided by the future state of the night.

Ten o'clock came, but still there was no change; eleven passed, and on opening the door to observe if there were any likelihood of its clearing up, a blast of wind, mingled with rain, nearly blew me off my feet. At length it was approaching to the hour of midnight; and on examining a third time, I found it had calmed a little, and no longer rained.

I instantly got my oak stick, muffled myself in my greatcoat, strapped my hat about my ears, and, as the place of meeting was only a quarter of a mile distant, I presently set out.

The appearance of the heavens was lowering and angry, particularly in that point where the light of the moon fell against the clouds, from a seeming chasm in them, through which alone she was visible. The edges of this chasm were faintly bronzed, but the dense body of the masses that hung piled on each side of her was black and impenetrable to sight. In no other point of the heavens was there any part of the sky visible; a deep veil of clouds overhung the horizon, yet was the light sufficient to give occasional glimpses of the rapid shifting which took place in this dark canopy, and of the tempestuous agitation with which the midnight storm swept to and fro beneath it.

At length I arrived at a long slated house, situated in a solitary part of the neighbourhood; a little below it ran a small stream, which was now swollen above its banks, and rushing with mimic roar over the flat meadows beside it. The appearance of the bare slated building in such a night was particularly sombre, and to those, like me, who knew the purpose to which it was usually devoted, it was, or ought to have been, peculiarly so. There it stood, silent and gloomy, without any appearance of human life or enjoyment about or within it. As I approached, the moon once more had broken

out of the clouds, and shone dimly upon the wet, glittering slates and windows with a deathlike lustre, that gradually faded away as I left the point of observation and entered the folding-door. It was the parish chapel.

The scene which presented itself here was in keeping not only with the external appearance of the house, but with the darkness, the storm, and the hour, which was now a little after midnight. About eighty persons were sitting in dead silence upon the circular steps of the altar. They did not seem to move; and as I entered and advanced the echo of my footsteps rang through the building with a lonely distinctness which added to the solemnity and mystery of the circumstances about me. The windows were secured with shutters on the inside, and on the altar a candle was lighted, which burned dimly amid the surrounding darkness, and lengthened the shadow of the altar itself, and those of six or seven persons who stood on its upper steps, until they mingled in the obscurity which shrouded the lower end of the chapel. The faces of the men who sat on the altar steps were not distinctly visible, yet their prominent and more characteristic features were in sufficient relief, and I observed that some of the most malignant and reckless spirits in the parish were assembled. In the eyes of those who stood at the altar, and whom I knew to be invested with authority over the others, I could perceive gleams of some latent and ferocious purpose, kindled, as I soon observed, into a fiercer expression of vengeance by the additional excitement of ardent spirits, with which they had stimulated themselves to a point of determination that mocked at the apprehension of all future responsibility, either in this world or the next.

The welcome which I received on joining them was far different from the boisterous good-humour that used to mark our greetings on other occasions: just a nod of the head from this or that person, on the part of those *who sat*, with a *ghud dhemur tha thu?*¹ in a suppressed voice, even below a common whisper; but from the standing group, who were evidently the projectors of the enterprise, I received a convulsive grasp of the hand, accompanied by a fierce and desperate look that seemed to search my eye and countenance, to try if I were a person not likely to shrink from whatever they had resolved to execute. It is surprising to think of the powerful expression which a moment of intense interest or great danger is capable of giving to the eye, the features, and the slightest actions, especially in

¹ How are you?

those whose station in society does not require them to constrain nature, by the force of social courtesies, into habits that conceal their natural emotions. None of the standing group spoke ; but as each of them wrung my hand in silence his eye was fixed on mine with an expression of drunken confidence and secrecy, and an insolent determination not to be gainsayed without peril. If looks could be translated with certainty, they seemed to say, "We are bound upon a project of vengeance, and if you do not join us, remember that we *can* revenge." Along with this grasp they did not forget to remind me of the common bond by which we were united, for each man gave me the secret grip of Ribbonism in a manner that made the joints of my fingers ache for some minutes afterwards.

There was one present, however—the highest in authority—whose actions and demeanour were calm and unexcited. He seemed to labour under no unusual influence whatever, but evinced a serenity so placid and philosophical that I attributed the silence of the sitting group, and the restraint which curbed in the out-breaking passions of those who *stood*, entirely to his presence. He was a schoolmaster, who taught his daily school in that chapel, and acted also on Sunday in the capacity of clerk to the priest—an excellent and amiable old man, who knew little of his illegal connections and atrocious conduct.

When the ceremonies of brotherly recognition and friendship were past, the captain (by which title I shall designate the last-mentioned person) stooped, and raising a jar of whisky on the corner of the altar, held a wine-glass to its neck, which he filled, and, with a calm nod, handed it to me to drink. I shrunk back, with an instinctive horror at the profaneness of such an act, in the house, and on the altar, of God, and peremptorily refused to taste the proffered draught. He smiled mildly at what he considered my superstition, and added quietly, and in a low voice, "You'll be wantin' it, I'm thinkin', afther the wettin' you got."

"Wet or dry," said I——

"Stop, man!" he replied, in the same tone; "spake low. But why wouldn't you take the whisky? Sure there's as holy people to the fore as you; didn't they all take it? An' I wish we may never do worse nor dhrink a harmless glass o' whisky to keep the cowl'd out, anyway."

"Well," said I, "I'll jist trust to God and the consequences for the cowl'd, Paddy, ma bouchal; but a blessed dhrop of it won't be crossin' my lips, avick; so no more ghosther about it—dhrink it yourself, if you like. Maybe you want it as much as I do; wherein I've the patthern of a good big coat upon me, so

thick, your sowl, that if it was rainin' bullocks a dhrop wouldn't get under the nap of it."

He gave me a calm but keen glance as I spoke.

"Well, Jim," said he, "it's a good comrade you've got for the weather that's in it; but, in the manetime, to set you a dacent patthern, I'll just take this myself"—saying which, with the jar still upon its side, and the forefinger of his left hand in its neck, he swallowed the spirits. "It's the first I dhrank to-night," he added, "nor would I dhrink it now, only to show you that I've heart an' spirit to do the thing that we're all bound an' sworn to, when the proper time comes;" after which he laid down the glass, and turned up the jar, with much coolness, upon the altar.

During our conversation those who had been summoned to this mysterious meeting were pouring in fast; and as each person approached the altar he received from one to two or three glasses of whisky, according as he chose to limit himself; but, to do them justice, there were not a few of those present who, in spite of their own desire and the captain's express invitation, refused to taste it in the house of God's worship. Such, however, as were scrupulous he afterwards recommended to take it on the outside of the chapel door, which they did, as, by that means, the sacrilege of the act was supposed to be evaded.

About one o'clock they were all assembled except six; at least so the captain asserted on looking at a written paper.

"Now, boys," said he, in the same low voice, "we are all present except the thraitors whose names I am goin' to read to you; not that we are to count thim thraitors, till we know whether or not it was in their power to come. Anyhow, the night's terrible—but, boys, you're to know that neither fire nor wather is to prevint yees, when duly summoned to attind a meeting—particularly whin the summons is widout a name, as you have been told that there is always something of consequence to be done *thin*."

He then read out the names of those who were absent, in order that the real cause of their absence might be ascertained, declaring that they would be dealt with accordingly. After this, with his usual caution, he shut and bolted the door, and having put the key in his pocket, ascended the steps of the altar, and for some time traversed the little platform from which the priest usually addresses the congregation.

Until this night I had never contemplated the man's countenance with any particular interest; but as he walked the platform I had an opportunity of observing him more closely. He was

slight in person, apparently not thirty ; and, on a first view, appeared to have nothing remarkable in his dress or features. I, however, was not the only person whose eyes were fixed upon him at that moment ; in fact, every one present observed him with equal interest, for hitherto he had kept the object of the meeting perfectly secret, and of course we all felt anxious to know it. It was while he traversed the platform that I scrutinised his features with a hope, if possible, to glean from them some evidence of what was passing within him. I could, however, mark but little, and that little was at first rather from the intelligence which seemed to subsist between him and those whom I have already mentioned as *standing* against the altar than from any indication of his own. Their gleaming eyes were fixed upon him with an intensity of savage and demon-like hope which blazed out in flashes of malignant triumph, as, upon turning, he threw a cool but rapid glance at them, to intimate the progress he was making in the subject to which he devoted the undivided energies of his mind. But in the course of his meditation I could observe, on one or two occasions, a dark shade come over his countenance, that contracted his brow into a deep furrow, and it was then, for the first time, that I saw the Satanic expression of which his face, by a very slight motion of its muscles, was capable. His hands, during this silence, closed and opened convulsively ; his eyes shot out two or three baleful glances, first to his confederates, and afterwards vacantly into the deep gloom of the lower part of the chapel ; his teeth ground against each other like those of a man whose revenge burns to reach a distant enemy ; and finally, after having wound himself up to a certain determination, his features relapsed into their original calm and undisturbed expression.

At this moment a loud laugh, having something supernatural in it, rang out wildly from the darkness of the chapel ; he stopped, and putting his open hand over his brows, peered down into the gloom, and said calmly, in Irish, "*Bee dhu hushth ; ha nihl anam inth*—hold your tongue ; it is not yet the time."

Every eye was now directed to the same spot, but, in consequence of its distance from the dim light on the altar, none could perceive the person from whom the laugh proceeded. It was by this time near two o'clock in the morning.

He now stood for a few moments on the platform, and his chest heaved with a depth of anxiety equal to the difficulty of the design he wished to accomplish.

"Brothers," said he—"for we are all brothers—sworn upon all that's blessed an' holy to obey whatever them that's over us,

manin' among ourselves,¹ wishes us to do—are you now ready, in the name of God, upon whose althar I stand, to fulfil yer oaths?”

The words were scarcely uttered when those who had *stood* beside the altar during the night sprang from their places, and ascending its steps rapidly, turned round, and raising their arms, exclaimed, “By all that’s sacred an’ holy, we’re willin’.”

In the meantime those who *sat* upon the steps of the altar instantly rose, and, following the example of those who had just spoken, exclaimed after them, “To be sure—by all that’s sacred an’ holy, we’re willin’.”

“Now, boys,” said the captain, “aren’t yees big fools for your pains? an’ one of yees doesn’t know what I mane.”

“You’re our captain,” said one of those who had stood at the altar, “an’ has yer ordhers from higher quarthers; of coorse, whatever ye command upon us we’re bound to obey you in.”

“Well,” said he, smiling, “I only wanted to thry yees; an’ by the oath yees tuck, there’s not a captain in the county has as good a right to be proud of his min as I have. Well, yees won’t rue it, maybe, when the right time comes; and for that same rason every one of yees must have a glass from the jar; thim that won’t dhrink it *in* the chapel can dhrink it *widout*; an’ here goes to open the door for them.”

He then distributed another glass to every man who would accept it, and brought the jar afterwards to the chapel door, to satisfy the scruples of those who would not drink within. When this was performed, and all duly excited, he proceeded—

“Now, brothers, you are solemnly sworn to obay me, and I’m sure there’s no thraithur here that ud parjure himself for a thrifle; but *I’m* sworn to obay them that’s above me, manin’ still among ourselves; an’ to show you that I don’t scruple to do it, here goes!”

He then turned round, and taking the Missal between his hands, placed it upon the altar. Hitherto every word was uttered in a low, precautionary tone; but on grasping the book he again turned round, and looking upon his confederates with the same Satanic expression which marked his countenance before, exclaimed, in a voice of deep determination—

“By this sacred an’ holy book of God, I will perform the action which we have met this night to accomplish, be that what it may; an’ this I swear upon God’s book an’ God’s althar!”

On concluding he struck the book violently with his open hand. At this moment the candle which burned before him went

¹ In opposition to the constituted authorities.

suddenly out, and the chapel was wrapped in pitchy darkness ; the sound as if of rushing wings fell upon our ears, and fifty voices dwelt upon the last words of his oath with wild and supernatural tones, that seemed to echo and to mock what he had sworn. There was a pause, and an exclamation of horror from all present. But the captain was too cool and steady to be disconcerted. He immediately groped about until he got the candle, and proceeding calmly to a remote corner of the chapel, took up a half-burned turf which lay there, and, after some trouble, succeeded in lighting it again. He then explained what had taken place ; which indeed was easily done, as the candle happened to be extinguished by a pigeon which sat directly above it. The chapel, I should have observed, was at this time, like many country chapels, unfinished inside, and the pigeons of a neighbouring dove-cote had built nests among the rafters of the unceiled roof ; which circumstance also explained the rushing of the wings, for the birds had been affrighted by the sudden loudness of the noise. The mocking voices were nothing but the echoes, rendered naturally more awful by the scene, the mysterious object of the meeting, and the solemn hour of the night.

When the candle was again lighted, and these startling circumstances accounted for, the persons whose vengeance had been deepening more and more during the night rushed to the altar in a body, where each, in a voice trembling with passionate eagerness, repeated the oath ; and as every word was pronounced the same echoes heightened the wildness of the horrible ceremony by their long and unearthly tones. The countenances of these human tigers were livid with suppressed rage ; their knit brows, compressed lips, and kindled eyes fell under the dim light of the taper with an expression calculated to sicken any heart not absolutely diabolical.

As soon as this dreadful rite was completed we were again startled by several loud bursts of laughter, which proceeded from the lower darkness of the chapel, and the captain, on hearing them, turned to the place, and, reflecting for a moment, said in Irish, "*Gutsho nish, avohelhee*—come hither now, boys."

A rush immediately took place from the corner in which they had secreted themselves all the night ; and seven men appeared, whom we instantly recognised as brothers and cousins of certain persons who had been convicted some time before for breaking into the house of an honest poor man in the neighbourhood, from whom, after having treated him with barbarous violence, they took away such fire-arms as he kept for his own protection.

It was evidently not the captain's intention to have produced these persons until the oath should have been generally taken, but the exulting mirth with which they enjoyed the success of his scheme betrayed them, and put him to the necessity of bringing them forward somewhat before the concerted moment.

The scene which now took place was beyond all power of description : peals of wild, fiend-like yells rang through the chapel, as the party which *stood* on the altar and that which had crouched in the darkness met ; wringing of hands, leaping in triumph, striking of sticks and fire-arms against the ground and the altar itself, dancing and cracking of fingers, marked the triumph of some hellish determination. Even the captain for a time was unable to restrain their fury ; but at length he mounted the platform before the altar once more, and, with a stamp of his foot, recalled their attention to himself and the matter in hand.

"Boys," said he, "enough of this, and too much ; an' well for us it is that the chapel is in a lonely place, or our foolish noise might do us no good. Let them that swore so manfully jist now stand a one side, till the rest kiss the book, one by one."

The proceedings, however, had by this time taken too fearful a shape for even the captain to compel them to a blindfold oath. The first man he called flatly refused to answer until he should hear the nature of the service that was required. This was echoed by the remainder, who, taking courage from the firmness of this person, declared generally that until they first knew the business they were to execute none of them would take the oath. The captain's lip quivered slightly, and his brow again became knit with the same hellish expression, which I have remarked gave him so much the appearance of an embodied fiend ; but this speedily passed away, and was succeeded by a malignant sneer, in which lurked, if there ever did in a sneer, "a laughing devil," calmly, determinedly atrocious.

"It wasn't worth yer whiles to refuse the oath," said he mildly, "for the truth is, I had next to nothing for yees to do. Not a hand, maybe, would have to *rise*, only jist to look on, an' if any resistance would be made, to show yourselves ; yer numbers would soon make them see that resistance would be no use whatever in the present case. At all evints, the oath of *secrecy* must be taken, or woe be to him that will refuse *that* ; he won't know the day, nor the hour, nor the minute, when he'll be made a spatchcock ov."

He then turned round, and, placing his right hand on the

Missal, swore, "In the presence of God, and before his holy altar, that whatever might take place that night he would keep secret from man or mortal, except the priest, and that neither bribery, nor imprisonment, nor death would wring it from his heart."

Having done this, he again struck the book violently, as if to confirm the energy with which he swore, and then calmly descending the steps, stood with a serene countenance, like a man conscious of having performed a good action. As this oath did not pledge those who refused to take the other to the perpetration of any specific crime, it was readily taken by all present. Preparations were then made to execute what was intended; the half-burned turf was placed in a little pot; another glass of whisky was distributed; and the door being locked by the captain, who kept the key as parish clerk and master, the crowd departed silently from the chapel.

The moment those who lay in the darkness during the night made their appearance at the altar, we knew at once the persons we were to visit; for, as I said before, they were related to the miscreants whom one of those persons had convicted, in consequence of their midnight attack upon himself and his family. The captain's object in keeping them unseen was that those present, not being aware of the duty about to be imposed on them, might have less hesitation about swearing to its fulfilment. Our conjectures were correct, for on leaving the chapel we directed our steps to the house in which this devoted man resided.

The night was still stormy, but without rain; it was rather dark too, though not so as to prevent us from seeing the clouds careering swiftly through the air. The dense curtain which had overhung and obscured the horizon was now broken, and large sections of the sky were clear, and thinly studded with stars that looked dim and watery, as did indeed the whole firmament; for in some places black clouds were still visible, threatening a continuance of tempestuous weather. The road appeared washed and gravelly; every dike was full of yellow water; and every little rivulet and larger stream dashed its hoarse music in our ears; every blast, too, was cold, fierce, and wintry, sometimes driving us back to a standstill, and again, when a turn in the road would bring it in our backs, whirling us along for a few steps with involuntary rapidity. At length the fated dwelling became visible, and a short consultation was held in a sheltered place between the captain and the two parties who seemed so eager for its destruction. The fire-arms were now loaded, and

their bayonets and short pikes, the latter shod and pointed with iron, were also got ready. The live coal which was brought in the small pot had become extinguished; but to remedy this two or three persons from a remote part of the county entered a cabin on the wayside, and under pretence of lighting their own and their comrades' pipes, procured a coal of fire, for so they called a lighted turf. From the time we left the chapel until this moment a profound silence had been maintained—a circumstance which, when I considered the number of persons present, and the mysterious and dreaded object of their journey, had a most appalling effect upon my spirits.

At length we arrived within fifty perches of the house, walking in a compact body, and with as little noise as possible; but it seemed as if the very elements had conspired to frustrate our design, for on advancing within the shade of the farm-hedge, two or three persons found themselves up to the middle in water, and on stooping to ascertain more accurately the state of the place, we could see nothing but one immense sheet of it—spread like a lake over the meadows which surrounded the spot we wished to reach.

Fatal night! The very recollection of it, when associated with the fearful tempests of the elements, grows, if that were possible, yet more wild and revolting. Had we been engaged in any innocent or benevolent enterprise, there was something in our situation just then that had a touch of interest in it to a mind imbued with a relish for the savage beauties of nature. There we stood, about a hundred and thirty in number, our dark forms bent forward, peering into the dusky expanse of water, with its dim gleams of reflected light, broken by the weltering of the mimic waves into ten thousand fragments, whilst the few stars that overhung it in the firmament appeared to shoot through it in broken lines, and to be multiplied fifty-fold in the gloomy mirror on which we gazed.

Over us was a stormy sky, and around us a darkness through which we could only distinguish, in outline, the nearest objects, whilst the wind swept strongly and dismally upon us. When it was discovered that the common pathway to the house was inundated, we were about to abandon our object and return home. The captain, however, stooped down low for a moment, and, almost closing his eyes, looked along the surface of the waters, and then, raising himself very calmly, said, in his usual quiet tone, "Yeese needn't go back, boys—I've found a way; jist follow me."

He immediately took a more circuitous direction, by which we

reached a causeway that had been raised for the purpose of giving a free passage to and from the house during such inundations as the present. Along this we had advanced more than half way when we discovered a breach in it, which, as afterwards appeared, had that night been made by the strength of the flood. This, by means of our sticks and pikes, we found to be about three feet deep and eight yards broad. Again we were at a loss how to proceed, when the fertile brain of the captain devised a method of crossing it.

"Boys," said he, "of coorse you've all played at leap-frog ; very well, strip and go in, a dozen of you, lean one upon the back of another from this to the opposite bank, where one must stand facing the outside man, both their shoulders agin one another, that the outside man may be supported. Then *we* can creep over you ; an' a dacent bridge you'll be, anyway."

This was the work of only a few minutes, and in less than ten we were all safely over.

Merciful heaven ! how I sicken at the recollection of what is to follow ! On reaching the dry bank, we proceeded instantly, and in profound silence, to the house ; the captain divided us into companies, and then assigned to each division its proper station. The two parties who had been so vindictive all the night he kept about himself ; for of those who were present they only were in his confidence, and knew his nefarious purpose ; their number was about fifteen. Having made these dispositions, he, at the head of about five of them, approached the house on the windy side, for the fiend possessed a coolness which enabled him to seize upon every possible advantage. That he had combustibles about him was evident, for in less than fifteen minutes nearly one-half of the house was enveloped in flames. On seeing this the others rushed over to the spot where he and his gang were standing, and remonstrated earnestly, but in vain ; the flames now burst forth with renewed violence, and as they flung their strong light upon the faces of the foremost group, I think hell itself could hardly present anything more Satanic than their countenances, now worked up into a paroxysm of infernal triumph at their own revenge. The captain's look had lost all its calmness, every feature started out into distinct malignity, the curve in his brow was deep, and ran up to the root of the hair, dividing his face into two segments, that did not seem to have been designed for each other. His lips were half open, and the corners of his mouth a little brought back on each side, like those of a man expressing intense hatred and triumph over an enemy who is in

the death struggle under his grasp. His eyes blazed from beneath his knit eyebrows with a fire that seemed to be lighted up in the infernal pit itself. It is unnecessary and only painful to describe the rest of his gang; demons might have been proud of such horrible visages as they exhibited—for they worked under all the power of hatred, revenge, and joy; and these passions blended into one terrible scowl, enough almost to blast any human eye that would venture to look upon it.

When the others attempted to intercede for the lives of the inmates, there were at least fifteen guns and pistols levelled at them.

"Another word," said the captain, "an' you're a corpse where you stand, or the first man who will dare to spake for them; no, no, it wasn't to spare them we came here. 'No mercy' is the password for the night, an' by the sacred oath I swore beyant in the chapel, any one among yees that will attempt to show it will find none at my hand. Surround the house, boys, I tell ye; I hear them stirring. 'No quarther—no mercy,' is the ordher of the night."

Such was his command over these misguided creatures that in an instant there was a ring round the house to prevent the escape of the unhappy inmates, should the raging element give them time to attempt it; for none present durst withdraw themselves from the scene, not only from an apprehension of the captain's present vengeance, or that of his gang, but because they knew that, even had they then escaped, an early and certain death awaited them from a quarter against which they had no means of defence. The hour now was about half-past two o'clock. Scarcely had the last words escaped from the captain's lips, when one of the windows of the house was broken, and a human head, having the hair in a blaze, was descried, apparently a woman's, if one might judge by the profusion of burning tresses, and the softness of the tones, notwithstanding that it called, or rather shrieked aloud, for help and mercy. The only reply to this was the whoop from the captain and his gang of "No mercy—no mercy!" and that instant the former and one of the latter rushed to the spot, and ere the action could be perceived the head was transfixed with a bayonet and a pike, both having entered it together. The word mercy was divided in her mouth; a short silence ensued; the head hung down on the window, but was instantly tossed back into the flames!

This action occasioned a cry of horror from all present, except the *gang* and their leader, which startled and enraged

the latter so much that he ran towards one of them, and had his bayonet, now reeking with the blood of its innocent victim, raised to plunge it in his body, when, dropping the point, he said in a piercing whisper, that hissed in the ears of all, "It's no use *now*, you know ; if one's to hang, all will hang ; so our safest way, you persave, is to lave none of them to tell the story. Ye *may* go now, if you wish ; but it won't save a hair of your heads. You cowardly set ! I knew if I had tould yees the sport that none of yees, except my *own* boys, would come, so I jist played a thrick upon you ; but remimber what you are sworn to, and stand to the oath ye tuck."

Unhappily, notwithstanding the wetness of the preceding weather, the materials of the house were extremely combustible ; the whole dwelling was now one body of glowing flame, yet the shouts and shrieks within rose awfully above its crackling and the voice of the storm, for the wind once more blew in gusts and with great violence. The doors and windows were all torn open, and such of those within as had escaped the flames rushed towards them, for the purpose of further escape, and of claiming mercy at the hands of their destroyers ; but whenever they appeared the unearthly cry of "NO MERCY" rung upon their ears for a moment, and for a moment only, for they were flung back at the points of the weapons which the demons had brought with them to make the work of vengeance more certain.

As yet there were many persons in the house whose cry for life was strong as despair, and who clung to it with all the awakened powers of reason and instinct. The ear of man could hear nothing so strongly calculated to stifle the demon of cruelty and revenge within him as the long and wailing shrieks which rose beyond the elements in tones that were carried off rapidly upon the blast, until they died away in the darkness that lay behind the surrounding hills. Had not the house been in a solitary situation, and the hour the dead of night, any person sleeping within a moderate distance must have heard them, for such a cry of sorrow rising into a yell of despair was almost sufficient to have awakened the dead. It was lost, however, upon the hearts and ears that heard it : to them, though in justice be it said, to only comparatively a few of them, it was as delightful as the tones of soft and entrancing music.

The claims of the surviving sufferers were now modified : they supplicated merely to suffer death *by the weapons of their enemies* ; they were willing to bear that, provided they should be allowed to escape from the flames ; but no—the horrors of

the conflagration were calmly and malignantly gloried in by their merciless assassins, who deliberately flung them back into all their tortures. In the course of a few minutes a man appeared upon the side-wall of the house, nearly naked; his figure, as he stood against the sky in horrible relief, was so finished a picture of woe-begone agony and supplication that it is yet as distinct in my memory as if I were again present at the scene. Every muscle, now in motion by the powerful agitation of his sufferings, stood out upon his limbs and neck, giving him an appearance of desperate strength, to which by this time he must have been wrought up; the perspiration poured from his frame, and the veins and arteries of his neck were inflated to a surprising thickness. Every moment he looked down into the flames which were rising to where he stood; and as he looked the indescribable horror which flitted over his features might have worked upon the devil himself to relent. His words were few.

"My child," said he, "is still safe; she is an infant, a young crathur that never harmed you nor any one—she is still safe. Your mothers, your wives, have young, innocent childhre like it. Oh, spare her! think for a moment that it's one of your own. Spare it, as you hope to meet a just God; or if you don't, in mercy shoot me first—put an end to me before I see her burned!"

The captain approached him coolly and deliberately. "You'll prosecute no one now, you bloody informer," said he; "you'll convict no more boys for takin' an ould gun an' pistol from you, or for givin' you a neighbourly knock or two into the bargain."

Just then, from a window opposite him, proceeded the shrieks of a woman, who appeared at it with the infant in her arms. She herself was almost scorched to death; but, with the presence of mind and humanity of her sex, she was about to put the little babe out of the window. The captain noticed this, and, with characteristic atrocity, thrust, with a sharp bayonet, the little innocent, along with the person who endeavoured to rescue it, into the red flames, where they both perished. This was the work of an instant. Again he approached the man. "Your child is a coal now," said he, with deliberate mockery; "I pitched it in myself, on the point of this"—showing the weapon—"an' now is your turn"—saying which he clambered up, by the assistance of his gang, who stood with a front of pikes and bayonets bristling to receive the wretched man, should he attempt, in his despair, to throw himself from the wall. The captain got up, and placing the point of his bayonet

against his shoulder, flung him into the fiery element that raged behind him. He uttered one wild and terrific cry as he fell back, and no more. After this nothing was heard but the crackling of the fire and the rushing of the blast: all that had possessed life within were consumed, amounting either to eleven or fifteen persons.

When this was accomplished, those who took an active part in the murder stood for some time about the conflagration; and as it threw its red light upon their fierce faces and rough persons, soiled as they now were with smoke and black streaks of ashes, the scene seemed to be changed to hell, the murderers to spirits of the damned, rejoicing over the arrival and the torture of some guilty soul. The faces of those who kept aloof from the slaughter were blanched to the whiteness of death; some of them fainted, and others were in such agitation that they were compelled to lean on their comrades. They became actually powerless with horror; yet to such a scene were they brought by the pernicious influence of Ribbonism.

It was only when the last victim went down that the conflagration shot up into the air with most unbounded fury. The house was large, deeply thatched, and well furnished; and the broad red pyramid rose up with fearful magnificence towards the sky. Abstractedly it had sublimity, but now it was associated with nothing in my mind but blood and terror. It was not, however, without a purpose that the captain and his gang stood to contemplate its effect. "Boys," said he, "we had betther be sartin that all's safe; who knows but there might be some of the sarpents crouchin' under a hape o' rubbish, to come out an' gibbet us to-morrow or next day. We had betther wait awhile, anyhow, if it was only to see the blaze."

Just then the flames rose majestically to a surprising height. Our eyes followed their direction; and we perceived, for the first time, that the dark clouds above, together with the intermediate air, appeared to reflect back, or rather to have caught, the red hue of the fire. The hills and country about us appeared with an alarming distinctness; but the most picturesque part of it was the effect or reflection of the blaze on the floods that spread over the surrounding plains. These, in fact, appeared to be one broad mass of liquid copper, for the motion of the breaking waters caught from the blaze of the high waving column, as reflected in them, a glaring light, which eddied, and rose, and fluctuated as if the flood itself had been a lake of molten fire.

Fire, however, destroys rapidly. In a short time the flames sank—became weak and flickering—by-and-by they shot out only in fits—the crackling of the timbers died away—the surrounding darkness deepened—and ere long the faint light was overpowered by the thick volumes of smoke that rose from the ruins of the house and its murdered inhabitants.

“Now, boys,” said the captain, “all is safe—we may go. Remimber, every man of you, what you’ve sworn this night on the book an’ althar of God—not on a heretic Bible. If you perjure yourselves, you may hang us; but let me tell you, for your comfort, that if you do there is them livin’ that will take care the lase of your own lives will be but short.”

After this we dispersed every man to his own home.

Reader, not many months elapsed ere I saw the bodies of this captain, whose name was Patrick Devann, and all those who were actively concerned in the perpetration of this deed of horror, withering in the wind, where they hung gibbeted near the scene of their nefarious villainy; and while I inwardly thanked heaven for my own narrow and almost undeserved escape, I thought in my heart how seldom, even in this world, justice fails to overtake the murderer, and to enforce the righteous judgment of God—that “whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed.”

This tale of terror is, unfortunately, too true. The scene of hellish murder detailed in it lies at Wildgoose Lodge, in the county of Louth, within about four miles of Carrickmacross, and nine of Dundalk. No such multitudinous murder has occurred, under similar circumstances, except the burning of the Sheas in the county of Tipperary. The name of the family burned in Wildgoose Lodge was Lynch. One of them had, shortly before this fatal night, prosecuted and convicted some of the neighbouring Ribbonmen, who visited him with severe marks of their displeasure in consequence of his having refused to enrol himself as a member of their body.

The language of the story is partly fictitious; but the facts are pretty closely such as were developed during the trial of the murderers. Both parties were Roman Catholics. There were, if the author mistake not, either twenty-five or twenty-eight of those who took an active part in the burning hanged and gibbeted in different parts of the county of Louth. Devann, the ringleader, hung for some months in chains, within about a hundred yards of his own house, and about half a mile from Wildgoose Lodge. His mother could neither go into nor out of her cabin without seeing his body swinging from the gibbet. Her usual exclamation on looking at him was, “God be good to the sowl of my poor marthyr!” The peasantry, too, frequently exclaimed on seeing him, “Poor Paddy!”—a gloomy fact that speaks volumes.

SHANE FADH'S WEDDING.

ON the following evening the neighbours were soon assembled about Ned's hearth, in the same manner as on the night preceding.

And we may observe, by the way, that although there was a due admixture of opposite creeds and conflicting principles, yet even then, and the time is not so far back, such was their cordiality of heart and simplicity of manners, when contrasted with the bitter and rancorous spirit of the present day, that the very remembrance of the harmony in which they lived is at once pleasing and melancholy.

After some preliminary chat—"Well, Shane," said Andy Morrow, addressing Shane Fadh, "will you give us an account of your wedding? I'm told it was the greatest let-out that ever was in this country, before or since."

"And you may say that, Mr. Morrow," said Shane. "I was at many a wedding myself, but never at the likes of my own, barring Tim Lanigan's, that married Father Corrigan's niece."

"I believe," said Andy, "that, too, was a dashing one; however, it's your own we want. Come, Nancy, fill these measures again, and let us be comfortable, at all events; and give Shane a double one, for talking's druthy work. I'll pay for this round."

When the liquor was got in, Shane, after taking a draught, laid down his pint, pulled out his steel tobacco-box, and after twisting off a chew between his teeth, closed the box, and commenced the story of his wedding.

"When I was a Brine-Oge,"¹ said Shane, "I was as wild as an unbroken cowlt—no divilment was too hard for me; and so signs on it, for there wasn't a piece of mischief done in the parish but was laid at my door—and the dear knows I had enough of my own to answer for, let alone to be set down for that of other people; but, any way, there was many a thing done in my name when I knew neither act nor part about it. One of them I'll mintion. Dick Cuillenan, father to Paddy,

¹ A young man full of fun and frolic.

that lives at the crass roads, beyant Gunpowdher Lodge, was over head and ears in love with Jimmy Finigan's eldest daughter, Mary, then, sure enough, as purty a girl as you'd meet in a fair—indeed, I think I'm looking at her, with her fair flaxen ringlets hanging over her shoulders, as she used to pass our house, going to mass of a Sunday. God rest her sowl, she's now in glory—that was before she was my wife. Many a happy day we passed together; and I could take it to my death that an ill word, let alone to rise our hands to one another, never passed between us—only one day, that a word or two happened about the dinner, in the middle of Lent, being a little too late, so that the horses were kept nigh hand half-an-hour out of the plough; and I wouldn't have valued that so much, only that it was *Bealcam*¹ Doherty that joined me in ploughing that year—and I was vexed not to take all I could out of him, for he was a raal Turk himself.

"I disremimber now what passed between us as to words, but I know I had a duck-egg in my hand, and when she spoke I raised my arm, and nailed—poor Larry Tracy, our servant boy, between the two eyes with it, although the crathur was ating his dinner quietly forenent me, not saying a word.

"Well, as I tould you, Dick was ever after her, although her father and mother would rather see her *under boord* than joined to any of that connection; and as for herself, she couldn't bear the sight of him—he was sich an upsetting, conceited puppy, that thought himself too good for every girl. At any rate, he tried often and often, in fair and market, to get striking up with her; and both coming from and going to mass 'twas the same way, for ever after and about her, till the state he was in spread over the parish like wildfire. Still, all he could do was of no use; except to bid him the time of day, she never entered into discoorse with him at all, at all. But there was no putting the likes of him off; so he got a quart of spirits in his pocket one night, and, without saying a word to mortal, off he sets, full speed, to her father's, in order to brake the thing to the family.

"Mary might be about seventeen at this time, and her mother looked almost as young and fresh as if she hadn't been married at all. When Dick came in you may be sure they were all surprised at the sight of him. But they were civil people, and the mother wiped a chair, and put it over near the fire for him to sit down upon, waiting to hear what he'd say, or what he wanted, although they could give a purty good guess as to that,

¹ Crooked mouth.

but they only wished to put him off with as little offinice as possible. When Dick *sot* awhile, talking about what the price of hay and oats would be in the following summer, and other subjects that he thought would show his knowledge of farming and cattle, he pulls out his bottle, encouraged to it by their civil way of talking, and telling the ould couple that as he came over on his *kailyee*¹ he had brought a drop in his pocket to sweeten the discoorse, axing Susy Finigan, the mother, for a glass to send it round with, at the same time drawing over his chair close to Mary, who was knitting her stocken up beside her little brother Michael, and chatting to the gorsoon, for fraid that Cuillenan might think she paid *him* any attention. When Dick got along-side of her, he began, of coorse, to pull out her needles and spoil her knitting, as is customary before the young people come to close spaking. Mary, howsomever, had no welcome for him; so says she, 'You ought to know, Dick Cuillenan, who you spake to before you make the freedom you do.'

"'But you don't know,' says Dick, 'that I am a great hand at spoiling the girls' knitting; it's a fashion I've got,' says he.

"'It's a fashion, then,' says Mary, 'that'll be apt to get you a broken mouth some time.'² 'Then,' says Dick, 'whoever does that must marry me.'

"'And them that gets you will have a prize to brag of,' says she. 'Stop yourself, Cuillenan; single your freedom and double your distance, if you plase; I'll cut my coat off no such cloth.'

"'Well, Mary,' says he, 'maybe, if *you* don't, as good will; but you won't be so cruel as all that comes to; the worst side of you is out, I think.'

"He was now beginning to make greater freedom, but Mary rises from her seat and whisks away with herself, her cheeks as red as a rose with vexation at the fellow's imperance. 'Very well,' says Dick, 'off you go; but there's as good fish in the *say* as ever was caught. I'm sorry to see, Susy,' says he to her mother, 'that Mary's no friend of mine, and I'd be mighty glad to find it otherwise; for, to tell the truth, I'd wish to become

¹ *Kailyee*—a friendly evening visit.

² It is no unusual thing in Ireland for a country girl to repulse a fellow whom she thinks beneath her, if not by a flat at least by a flattening refusal; nor is it seldom that the "*argumentum fistycuffium*" is resorted to on such occasions. I have more than once seen a disagreeable lover receive, from the fair hand which he sought, so masterly a blow that a bleeding nose rewarded his ambition and silenced for a time his importunity.

connected with the family. In the manetime, hadn't you better get us a glass till we drink one bottle on the head of it, any way?' "

" 'Why, then, Dick Cuillenan,' says the mother, 'I don't wish you anything else than good luck and happiness; but, as to Mary, she's not *for* you herself, nor would it be a good match between the families at all. Mary is to have her grandfather's sixty guineas, and the two *moulleens*¹ that her uncle Jack left her four years ago has brought her a good stock for any farm. Now, if she married you, Dick, where's the farm to bring her to?—surely, it's not upon them seven acres of stone and bent, upon the long Esker, that I'd let my daughter go to live. So, Dick, put up your bottle, and in the name of God go home, boy, and mind your business; but, above all, when you want a wife, go to them that you may have a right to expect, and not to a girl like Mary Finigan, that could lay down guineas where you could hardly find shillings.'

" 'Very well, Susy,' says Dick, nettled enough, as he well might; 'I say to you, just as I say to your daughter, if you be proud, there's no force.'

" 'But what has this to do with you, Shane?' " asked Andy Morrow. " 'Sure we wanted to hear an account of *your* wedding, but instead of that, it's Dick Cuillenan's history you're giving us.'

" 'That's jist it,' said Shane; 'sure, only for this same Dick, I'd never get Mary Finigan for a wife. Dick took Susy's advice, bekase, after all, the undacent drop was in him, or he'd never have brought the bottle out of the house at all; but, faith, he riz up, put the whisky in his pocket, and went home with a face on him as black as my hat with venom. Well, things passed on till the Christmas following, when one night, after the Finigans had all gone to bed, there comes a crowd of fellows to the door, thumping at it with great violence, and swearing that if the people within wouldn't open it immediately, it would be smashed into smithereens. The family, of coorse, were all alarmed; but, somehow or other, Susy herself got suspicious that it might be something about Mary; so up she gets, and sends the daughter to her own bed, and lies down herself in the daughter's.

" 'In the manetime Finigan got up, and, after lighting a candle, opened the door at once. 'Come, Finigan,' says a strange voice, 'put out the candle, except you wish to make

¹ Cows without horns.

a candlestick of the thatch,' says he—'or to give you a prod of a bagnet under the ribs,' says he.

"It was a folly for one man to go to bell-the-cat with a whole crowd; so he blew the candle out, and next minute they rushed in, and went as straight as a rule to Mary's bed. The mother all the time lay close, and never said a word. At any rate, what could be expected, only that, do what she could, at the long run she must go. So, accordingly, after a very hard battle on her side, being a powerful woman, she was obliged to travel—but not till she had left many of them marks to remimber her by; among the rest, Dick himself got his nose split on his face with the stroke of a churn-staff, so that he carried half a nose on each cheek till the day of his death. Still, there was very little spoke, for they didn't wish to betray themselves on any side. The only thing that Finigan could hear was my name repated several times, as if the whole thing was going on under my direction; for Dick thought that if there was any one in the parish likely to be set down for it, it was me.

"When Susy found they were for putting her behind one of them on a horse, she rebelled again, and it took near a dozen of boys to hoist her up; but one vagabone of them, that had a rusty broad-sword in his hand, gave her a skelp with the flat side of it that subdued her at once, and off they went. Now, above all nights in the year, who should be dead but my own full cousin, Denis Fadh—God be good to him!—and I, and Jack and Dan, his brothers, while bringing home whisky for the wake and berrin, met them on the road. At first we thought them distant relations coming to the wake, but when I saw only one woman among the set, and she mounted on a horse, I began to suspect that all wasn't right. I accordingly turned back a bit, and walked near enough without their seeing me to hear the discoorse, and discover the whole business. In less than no time I was back at the wake-house, so I up and tould them what I saw, and off we set, about forty of us, with good cudgels, scythe-snedds, and hooks, fully bent to bring her back from them, come or go what would. And troth, sure enough, we did it; and I was the man myself that rode after the mother on the same horse that carried her off.

"From this out, when and wherever I got an opportunity, I whispered the soft nonsense, Nancy, into poor Mary's ear, until I put my *comedher*¹ on her, and she couldn't live at all

¹ *Comedher*—come hither—alluding to the burden of an old love charm which is still used by the young of both sexes on May morn ing. It is a literal translation of the Irish word "gutsho."

without me. But I was something for a woman to look at then, anyhow, standing six feet two in my stocking soles, which, you know, made them call me Shane *Fadh*.¹ At that time I had a dacent farm of fourteen acres in Crocknagooran—the same that my son Ned has at the present time ; and though, as to wealth, by no manner of manes fit to compare with the Finigans, yet, upon the whole, she might have made a worse match. The father, however, wasn't for me ; but the mother was. So after drinking a bottle or two with the mother, Sarah Traynor, her cousin, and Mary, along with Jack Donnellan on my part, in their own barn, unknownst to the father, we agreed to make a runaway match of it ; appointed my uncle, Brian Slevin's, as the house we'd go to. The next Sunday was the day appointed ; so I had my uncle's family prepared, and sent two gallons of whisky, to be there before us, knowing that neither the Finigans nor my own friends liked stinginess.

"Well, well, after all, the world is a strange thing—it's myself hardly knows what to make of it. It's I that did dote night and day upon that girl ; and indeed there was them that could have seen me in Jimmaiky for her sake, for she was the beauty of the county, not to say of the parish, for a girl in her station. For my part, I could neither ate nor sleep for thinking that she was so soon to be my own married wife, and to live under my roof. And when I'd think of it, how my heart would bounce to my throat with downright joy and delight. The mother had made us promise not to meet till Sunday, for fraid of the father becoming suspicious ; but, if I was to be shot for it, I couldn't hinder myself from going every night to the great flowering white-thorn that was behind their garden ; and although she knew I hadn't promised to come, yet there she still was : something, she said, tould her I *would* come.

"The next Sunday we met at *Althadhawan* wood, and I'll never forget what I felt when I was going to the green at St. Patrick's Chair, where the boys and girls met on Sunday ; but there she was—the bright eyes dancing with joy in her head to see me. We spent the evening in the wood till it was dusk—I bating them all leaping, dancing, and throwing the stone ; for, by my song, I thought I had the action of ten men in me ; she looking on, and smiling like an angel, when I'd lave them miles behind me. As it grew dusk they all went home, except herself and me, and a few more, who maybe had something of the same kind on hands.

¹ *Fadh* is tall or long.

"'Well, Mary,' says I, 'acushla machree, it's dark enough for us to go ; and in the name of God let us be off.' The crathur looked into my face, and got pale—for she was very young then. 'Shane,' says she, and she thrimble like an aspen lafe, 'I'm going to trust myself with you for ever—for ever, Shane, avourneen,'—and her sweet voice broke into purty murmurs as she spoke,—'whether for happiness or sorrow, God he only knows. I can bear poverty and distress, sickness and want, with you, but I can't bear to think that you should ever forget to love me as you do now, or that your heart should ever cool to me ; but I'm sure,' says she, 'you'll never forget this night, and the solemn promises you made me, before God and the blessed skies above us.'

"We were sitting at the time under the shade of a rowan tree, and I had only one answer to make—I pulled her to my breast, where she laid her head and cried like a child, with her cheek against mine. My own eyes wern't dry, although I felt no sorrow ; but—but—I never forgot that night—and I never will."

He now paused a few minutes, being too much affected to proceed.

"Poor Shane," said Nancy in a whisper to Andy Morrow, "night and day he's thinking about that woman ; she's now dead going on a year, and you would think by him, although he bears up very well before company, that she died only yestherday—but indeed it's he that was always the kind-hearted, affectionate man ; and a better husband never broke bread."

"Well," said Shane, resuming the story, and clearing his voice, "it's a great consolation to me, now that she's gone, to think that I never broke the promise I made her that night ; for, as I tould you, except in regard of the duck-egg, a bitther word never passed between us. I was in a passion then, for a wonder, and bent on showing her that I was a dangerous man to provoke ; so jist to give her a *spice* of what I could do, I made *Larry* feel it—and may God forgive me for raising my hand even then to her. But sure he would be a brute that would beat such a woman except by proxy. When it was clear dark we set off, and after crossing the country for two miles, reached my uncle's, where a great many of my friends were expecting us. As soon as we came to the door I struck it two or three times, for that was the sign, and my aunt came out, and taking Mary in her arms, kissed her, and, with a thousand welcomes, brought us both in.

"You all know that the best of aiting and dhrinking is provided when a runaway couple is expected ; and indeed there was *galore*¹ of both there. My uncle and all that were within welcomed us again ; and many a good song and hearty jug of punch was sent round that night. The next morning my uncle went to her father's and broke the business to him at once. Indeed, it wasn't very hard to do, for I believe it reached him before he saw my uncle at all ; so she was brought home that day, and on the Thursday night after, I, my father, uncle, and several other friends, went there and made the match. She had sixty guineas that her grandfather left her, thirteen head of cattle, two feather and two chaff beds, with sheeting, quilts, and blankets ; three pieces of bleached linen, and a flock of geese of her own rearing—upon the whole, among ourselves, it wasn't aisy to get such a fortune.

"Well, the match was made, and the wedding-day appointed ; but there was one thing still to be managed, and that was how to get over the *standing* at mass on Sunday, to make satisfaction for the scandal we gave the church by running away with one another—but that's all stuff, for who cares a pin about standing, when three halves of the parish are married in the same way. The only thing that vexed me was that it would keep back the wedding-day. However, her father and my uncle went to the priest and spoke to him, trying, of coorse, to get us off of it, but he knew we were fat geese, and was in for giving us a plucking.—Hut, tut !—he wouldn't hear of it at all, not he ; for although he would ride fifty miles to sarve either of us, he couldn't brake the new orders that he had got only a few days before that from the bishop. No ; we must *stand*—for it would be setting a bad example to the parish ; and if he would let *us* pass, how could he punish the rest of his flock, when they'd be guilty of the same thing ?

"'Well, well, your reverence,' says my uncle, winking at her father, 'if that's the case it can't be helped, anyhow—they must only stand, as many a dacent father and mother's child has done before them, and will again, plase God—your reverence is right in doing your duty.'

"'True for you, Brian,' says his reverence ; 'and yet, God knows, there's no man in the parish would be sorrier to see such a dacent, comely young couple put upon a level with all the scrubs of the parish ; and I know, Jimmy Finigan, it would go hard with your young, bashful daughter to get through

¹ *Galore*—more than enough—great abundance.

with it, having the eyes of the whole congregation staring on her.'

"'Why, then, your reverence, as to that,' says my uncle, who was just as stiff as the other was stout, 'the bashfullest of them will do more nor that to get a husband.'

"'But you tell me,' says the priest, 'that the wedding-day is fixed upon; how will you manage there?'

"'Why, put it off for three Sundays longer, to be sure,' says the uncle.

"'But you forget this, Brian,' says the priest, 'that good luck or prosperity never attends the putting off of a wedding.'

"Now here, you see, is where the priest had them—for they knew that as well as his reverence himself—so they were in a puzzle again.

"'It's a disagreeable business,' says the priest; 'but the truth is, I could get them off with the bishop only for one thing—I owe him five guineas of altar-money, and I'm so far back in dues that I'm not able to pay him. If I could enclose this to him in a letter, I would get them off at once, although it would be bringing myself into trouble with the parish afterwards; but, at all events,' says he, 'I wouldn't make every one of you both; so, to prove that I wish to sarve you, I'll sell the best cow in my byre and pay him myself, rather than their wedding-day should be put off, poor things, or themselves brought to any bad luck—the Lord keep them from it!'

"While he was speaking he stamped his foot two or three times on the flure, and the housekeeper came in. 'Katty,' says he, 'bring us in a bottle of whisky; at all events, I can't let you away,' says he, 'without tasting something, and drinking luck to the young folks.'

"'In troth,' says Jimmy Finigan, 'and begging your reverence's pardon, the sorra cow you'll sell this bout, anyhow, on account of me or my childhre, bekase I'll lay down on the nail what'll clear you and the bishop; and in the name of goodness, as the day is fixed and all, let the crathurs not be disappointed.'

"'Jimmy,' says my uncle, 'if you go to that, you'll pay but your share, for I insist upon laying down one-half, at laste.'

"At any rate they came down with the cash, and after drinking a bottle between them, went home in choice spirits entirely at their good luck in so aisily getting us off. When they had left the house a bit the priest sent after them. 'Jimmy,' says he to Finigan, 'I forgot a circumstance, and that is to tell you that I will go and marry them at your own house, and bring Father James, my curate, with me.' 'Oh,

wurrah ! no,' said both ; ' don't mention *that*, your reverence, except you wish to break their hearts, out and out ! Why, that would be a thousand times worse nor making them stand to do penance. Doesn't your reverence know that if they hadn't the pleasure of *running for the bottle* the whole wedding wouldn't be worth three-halfpence ?' ' Indeed I forgot that, Jimmy.' ' But sure,' says my uncle, ' your reverence and Father James must be at it, whether or not ; for that we intended from the first.' ' Tell them I'll run for the bottle too,' says the priest, laughing ; ' and will make some of them look sharp, never fear.' Well, by my song, so far all was right ; and maybe it's we that weren't glad—maning Mary and myself—that there was nothing more in the way to put off the wedding-day. So, as the bridegroom's share of the expense always is to provide the whisky, I'm sure, for the honour and glory of taking the blooming young crathur from the great lot of bachelors that were all breaking their hearts about her, I couldn't do less nor finish the thing dacently—knowing, besides, the high doings that the Finigans would have of it—for they were always looked upon as a family that never had their heart in a trifle when it would come to the push. So, you see, I and my brother Mickey, my cousin Tom, and Dom'nick Nulty, went up into the mountains to Tim Cassidy's still-house, where we spent a glorious day, and bought fifteen gallons of stuff, that one drop of it would bring the tear, if possible, to a young widdy's eye that had berrid a bad husband. Indeed, this was at my father's bidding, who wasn't a bit behindhand with any of them in cutting a dash. ' Shane,' says he to me, ' you know the Finigans of ould, that they won't be contint with what would do another, and that except they go beyant the thing entirely they won't be satisfied. They'll have the whole country-side at the wedding, and we must let them see that we have a spirit and a faction of our own,' says he, ' that we needn't be ashamed of. They've got all kinds of ateables in cartloads, and as we're to get the drinkables, we must see and give as good as they'll bring. I myself, and your mother, will go round and invite all we can think of, and let you and Mickey go up the hills to Tim Cassidy, and get fifteen gallons of whisky, for I don't think less will do us.'

" This we accordingly complied with, as I said, and surely better stuff never went down the *red lane*¹ than the same whisky ; for the people knew nothing about watering it then, at

¹ Humorous periphrasis for throat.

all at all. The next thing I did was to get a fine shop cloth coat, a pair of top boots, and buckskin breeches fit for a squire, along with a new Caroline hat that would throw off the wet like a duck. Mat Kavanagh, the schoolmaster from Findramore bridge, lent me his watch for the occasion, after my spending near two days learning from him to know what o'clock it was. At last, somehow, I mastered that point so well that in a quarter of an hour, at least, I could give a dacent guess at the time upon it.

"Well, at last the day came. The wedding morning, or the bride's part of it, as they say, was beautiful. It was then the month of July. The evening before my father and my brother went over to Jimmy Finigan's to make the regulations for the wedding. We—that is, my party—were to be at the bride's house about ten o'clock, and we were then to proceed, all on horseback, to the priest's to be married. We were then, after drinking something at Tom Hance's public-house, to come back as far as the Dumbhill, where we were to start and run for the bottle. That morning we were all up at the skriek of day. From six o'clock my own faction, friends and neighbours, began to come, all mounted; and about eight o'clock there was a whole regiment of them, some on horses, some on mules, others on raheries and asses; and, by my word, I believe little Dick Snudaghan, the tailor's apprentice, that had a hand in making my wedding clothes, was mounted upon a buck goat, with a bridle of selvages tied to his horns. Anything at all to keep their feet from the ground; for nobody would be allowed to go with the wedding that hadn't some animal between them and the earth.

"To make a long story short, so large a bridegroom's party was never seen in that country before, save and except Tim Lanigan's, that I mentioned just now. It would make you split your face laughing to see the figure they cut: some of them had saddles and bridles—others had saddles and halthers; some had back-suggawns of straw, with hay stirrups to them, but good bridles; others had sacks filled up as like saddles as they could make them, girthed with hay ropes five or six times tied round the horse's body. When one or two of the horses wouldn't carry double, except the hind rider sat strideways, the women had to be put foremost, and the men behind them. Some had dacent pillions enough, but most of them had none at all, and the women were obligated to sit *where* the crupper ought to be—and a hard card they had to play to keep their seats even when the horses walked asy, so what must it be

when they came to a gallop ; but that same was nothing at all to a trot.

"From the time they began to come that morning, you may be sartain that the glass was no cripple, anyhow—although, for fear of accidents, we took care not to go too deep. At eight o'clock we sat down to a rousing breakfast, for we thought it best to eat a trifle at home, lest they might think that what we were to get at the bride's breakfast might be thought any novelty. As for my part, I was in such a state that I couldn't let a morsel crass my throat, nor did I know what end of me was uppermost. After breakfast they all got their cattle, and I my hat and whip, and was ready to mount, when my uncle whispered to me that I must kneel down and ax my father and mother's blessing, and forgiveness for all my disobedience and offinces towards them—and also to requist the blessing of my brothers and sisters. Well, in a short time I was down ; and, my goodness ! such a hullabaloo of crying as was there in a minute's time ! 'Oh, Shane Fadh—Shane Fadh, acushla machree !' says my poor mother in Irish, 'you're going to break up the ring about your father's hearth and mine—going to lave us, avourneen, for ever, and we to hear your light foot and sweet voice, morning, noon, and night, no more ! Oh !' says she, 'it's you that was the good son all out ; and the good brother, too. Kind and cheerful was your beautiful voice, and full of love and affection was your heart ! Shane, avourneen deelish, if ever I was harsh to you, forgive your poor mother, that will never see you more on her flure as one of her own family.'

"Even my father, that wasn't much given to crying, couldn't speak, but went over to a corner and cried till the neighbours stopped him. As for my brothers and sisters, they were all in an uproar ; and I myself cried like a Trojan, merely bekase I see them at it. My father and mother both kissed me, and gave me their blessing ; and my brothers and sisters did the same, while you'd think all their hearts would break. 'Come, come,' says my uncle, 'I'll have none of this ; what a hubbub you make, and your son going to be well married—going to be joined to a girl that your betters would be proud to get into connection with. You should have more sense, Rose Campbell—you ought to thank God that he had the luck to come across such a colleen for a wife ; that it's not going to his grave, instead of into the arms of a purty girl—and what's better, a good girl. So quit your blubbering, Rose ; and you, Jack,' says he to my father, 'that ought to have more sense, stop this instant. Clear

off, every one of you, out of this, and let the young boy go to his horse. Clear out, I say, or by the powers I'll—look at them three stags of hussies ; by the hand of my body, they're blubbering becase it's not their own story this blessed day. Move—bounce!—and you, Rose Oge, if you're not behind Dudley Fulton in less than no time, by the hole of my coat, I'll marry a wife myself, and then where will the twenty guineas be that I'm to lave you.' God rest his soul, and yet there was a tear in his eye all the while—even in spite of his joking !

"Anyhow, it's easy knowing that there wasn't sorrow at the bottom of their grief ; for they were all now laughing at my uncle's jokes, even while their eyes were red with the tears. My mother herself couldn't but be in good humour, and join her smile with the rest.

"My uncle now drove us all out before him ; not, however, till my mother had sprinkled a drop of holy water on each of us, and given me and my brother and sisters a small taste of blessed candle to prevent us from sudden death and accidents. My father and she didn't come with us then, but they went over to the bride's while we were all gone to the priest's house. At last we set off in great style and spirits—I well mounted on a good horse of my own, and my brother on one that he had borrowed from Peter Danellon, fully bent on winning the bottle. I would have borrowed him myself, but I thought it dacent to ride my own horse manfully, even though he never won a side of mutton or a saddle, like Danellon's. But the man that was most likely to come in for the bottle was little Billy Cormick, the tailor, who rode a blood-racer that young John Little had wickedly lent him for the special purpose ; he was a tall bay animal, with long small legs, a switch tail, and didn't know how to trot. Maybe we didn't cut a dash—and might have taken a town before us. Out we set about nine o'clock, and went across the country ; but I'll not stop to mintion what happened to some of them, even before we got to the bride's house. It's enough to say here, that sometimes one in crassing a stile or ditch would drop into the *shough*;¹ sometimes another would find himself headforemost on the ground ; a woman would be capsized here in crassing a ridgy field, bringing her fore-rider to the ground along with her ; another would be hanging like a broken arch, ready to come down, till some one would ride up and fix her on the seat. But as all this happened in going over the fields, we expected that when we'd

¹ Dyke or drain.

get out on the king's highway there would be less danger, as we would have no ditches or drains to crass. When we came in sight of the house, there was a general shout of welcome from the bride's party, who were on the watch for us. We couldn't do less nor give them back the chorus; but we had better have let that alone, for some of the young horses took the *stadh*,¹ others of them capered about; the asses—the sorra choke them—that were along with us should begin to bray, as if it was the king's birthday—and a mule of Jack Irwin's took it into his head to stand stock still. This brought another dozen of them to the ground; so that, between one thing or another, we were near half-an-hour before we got on the march again. When the blood-horse that the tailor rode saw the crowd and heard the shouting, he cocked his ears, and set off with himself full speed; but before he had got far he was without a rider, and went galloping up to the bride's house, the bridle hangin' about his feet. Billy, however, having taken a glass or two, wasn't to be cowed; so he came up in great blood, and swore he would ride him to America, sooner than let the bottle be won from the bridegroom's party.

"When we arrived, there was nothing but shaking hands and kissing, and all kinds of *slewsthering*—men kissing men—women kissing women—and after that men and women all through other. Another breakfast was ready for us; and here we all sat down, myself and my next relations in the bride's house, and the others in the barn and garden; for one house wouldn't hold the half of us. Eating, however, was all only talk. Of coorse we took some of the poteen again, and in a short time afterwards set off along the paved road to the priest's house to be tied as fast as he could make us, and that was fast enough. Before we went out to mount our horses, though, there was jist such a hullabaloo with the bride and her friends as there was with myself; but my uncle soon put a stop to it, and in five minutes had them breaking their hearts laughing.

"Bless my heart, what doings!—what roasting and boiling!—and what tribes of beggars and shulers, and vagabonds of all sorts and sizes, were sunning themselves about the doors—wishing us a thousand times long life and happiness. There was a fiddler and piper. The piper was to stop in my father-in-law's while we were going to be married, to keep the neighbours that were met there shaking their toes while we were at the priest's; and the fiddler was to come with ourselves, in order, you know, to have a

¹ Became restive.

dance at the priest's house, and to play for us coming and going ; for there's nothing like a taste of music when one's *on* for sport. As we were setting off, ould Mary M'Quade from Kilnashogue, who was sent for bekase she understood charms, and had the name of being lucky, tuck myself aside. 'Shane Fadh,' says she, 'you're a young man well to look upon ; may God bless you and keep you so ; and there's not a doubt but there's them here that wishes you ill—that would rather be in your shoes this blessed day, with your young *colleen bawn*,¹ that'll be your wife before the sun sets, plase the heavens. There's ould Fanny Barton, the wrinkled thief of a hag, that the Finigans axed here for the sake of her decent son-in-law, who ran away with her daughter Betty, that was the great beauty some years ago. Her breath's not good, Shane, and many a strange thing's said of her. Well, maybe I know more about that nor I'm going to mintion, anyhow. More betoken that it's not for nothing the white hare haunts the shrubbery behind her house.' 'But what harm could she do me, Sonsy Mary?' says I—for she was called Sonsy—'we have often sarved her one way or other.'

"'Ax me no questions about her, Shane,' says she ; 'don't I know what she did to Ned Donnelly, that was to be pitied, if ever a man was to be pitied, for as good as seven months after his marriage until I relieved him ; 'twas gone to a thread he was, and didn't they pay me decently for my throuble.'

"'Well, and what am I to do, Mary?' says I, knowing very well that what she *sed* was throe enough, although I didn't wish her to see that I was afeard.

"'Why,' says she, 'you must first exchange money with me, and then, if you do as I bid you, you may lave the rest to myself.'

"I then took out, begad, a dacent lot of silver—say a crown or so—for my blood was up, and the money was flush—and gave it to her ; for which I got a *cronagh-bawn* halfpenny in exchange.

"'Now,' says she, 'Shane, you must keep this in your company, and for your life and sowl don't part with it for nine days after your marriage ; but there's more to be done,' says she—'hould out your right knee.' So with this she unbuttoned three buttons of my buckskins, and made me loose the knot of my garther on the right leg. 'Now,' says she, 'if you keep them loose till after the priest says the words, and won't let the money I gave you go out of your company for nine days, along

¹ Fair girl.

with something else I'll do that you're to know nothing about, there's no fear of all their *fishthroges*.¹ She then pulled off her right shoe, and threw it after us for luck.

"We were now all in motion once more—the bride riding behind my man, and the bridesmaid behind myself—a fine bouncing girl she was, but not to be mentioned in the one year with my darlin'—in troth, it wouldn't be aisy getting such a couple as we were the same day, though it's myself that says it. Mary, dressed in a black castor hat, like a man's, a white muslin coat, with a scarlet silk handkercher about her neck, with a silver buckle and a blue ribbon, for luck, round her waist; her fine hair wasn't turned up at all, at all, but hung down in beautiful curls on her shoulders; her eyes you would think were all light; her lips as plump and as ripe as cherries—and maybe it's myself that wasn't to that time of day without tasting them, anyhow; and her teeth so even, and as white as a burnt bone. The day bated all for beauty. I don't know whether it was from the lightness of my own spirit it came, but I think that such a day I never saw from that to this. Indeed, I thought everything was dancing and smiling about me, and sartainly every one said that such a couple hadn't been married, nor such a wedding seen in the parish, for many a long year before.

"All the time as we went along we had the music; but then at first we were mightily puzzled what to do with the fiddler. To put him as a hind rider it would prevent him from playing, bekase how could he keep the fiddle before him and another so close to him? To put him foremost was as bad, for he couldn't play and hould the bridle together; so at last my uncle proposed that he should get behind himself, turn his face to the horse's tail, and saw away like a Trojan.

"It might be about four miles or so to the priest's house, and, as the day was fine, we got on gloriously. One thing, however, became troublesome. You see, there was a cursed set of ups and downs on the road, and as the riding *coutrements* were so bad with a great many of the weddingers, those that had no saddles going down steep places would work onward bit by bit, in spite of all they could do, till they'd be fairly on the horse's neck, and the women behind them would be on the animal's shoulders; and it required nice managing to balance themselves, for they might as well sit on the edge of a dale board. Many of them got tosses this way, though it all passed in good humour. But

¹ Charms of an evil nature.

no two among the whole set were more puzzled by this than my uncle and the fiddler—I think I see my uncle this minute, with his knees sticking into the horse's shoulders and his two hands upon his neck, keeping himself back, with a *crucht*¹ upon him; and the fiddler with his heels away towards the horse's tail, and he stretched back against my uncle, for all the world like two bricks laid against one another, and one of them falling. 'Twas the same thing going up a hill; whoever was behind would be hanging over the horse's tail, with the arm about the fore-rider's neck or body, and the other houlding the baste by the mane, to keep them both from sliding off backwards. Many a come down there was among them—but, as I said, it was all in good humour; and, accordingly, as regularly as they fell they were sure to get a cheer.

“When we got to the priest's house there was a hearty welcome for us all. The bride and I, with our next kindred and friends, went into the parlour. Along with these there was a set of young fellows who had been bachelors of the bride's, that got in with an intention of getting the first kiss, and, in coorse, of bating myself out of it. I got a whisper of this; so, by my song, I was determined to cut them all out in that, so well as I did in getting herself; but, you know, I couldn't be angry, even if they had got the foreway of me in it, bekase it's an old custom. While the priest was going over the business I kept my eye about me, and, sure enough, there were seven or eight fellows all waiting to snap at her. When the ceremony drew near a close I got up on one leg, so that I could bounce to my feet like lightning, and when it was finished I got her in my arm before you could say Jack Robinson, and, swinging her behind the priest, gave her the husband's first kiss. The next minute there was a rush after her; but, as I had got the first, it was but fair that they should come in according as they could, I thought, bekase, you know, it was all in the coorse of practice; but hould, there were two words to be said to that, for what does Father Dollard do but shoves them off—and a fine stout shoulder he had—shoves them off like children, and, getting his arms about Mary, gives her half-a-dozen smacks at least—oh, consuming to the one less—that mine was only a *cracker* to them. The rest then all kissed her, one after another, according

¹ The hump which constitutes a round-shouldered man. If the reader has ever seen Hogarth's illustrations of Hudibras, and remembers the redoubtable hero as he sits on horseback, he will be at no loss in comprehending what a *crucht* means.

as they could come in to get one. We then went straight to his reverence's barn, which had been cleared out for us the day before by his own directions, where we danced for an hour or two, and his reverence and his curate along with us.

"When this was over we mounted again, the fiddler taking his ould situation behind my uncle. You know it is usual, after getting the knot tied, to go to a public-house or *shebeen* to get some refreshment after the journey; so, accordingly, we went to little lame Larry Spooney's—grandfather to him that was transported the other day for staling Bob Beaty's sheep. He was called Spooney himself for his sheep-staling, ever since Paddy Keenan made the song upon him, ending with 'his house never wants a good ram-horn spoon'; so that, let people say what they will, these things run in the blood. Well, we went to his shebeen house, but the tithe of us couldn't get into it; so we sot on the green before the door, and, by my song, we *took*¹ dacently with *him*, anyhow; and, only for my uncle, it's odds but we would have been all fuddled.

"It was now that I began to notish a kind of coolness between my party and the bride's, and for some time I didn't know what to make of it. I wasn't long so, however; for my uncle, who still had his eyes about him, comes over to me and says, 'Shane, I doubt there will be bad work amongst these people, particularly betwixt the Dorans and the Flanagans. The truth is that the old business of the lawshoot will break out, and except they're kept from drink, take my word for it, there will be blood spilled. The running for the bottle will be a good excuse,' says he, 'so I think we had better move home before they go too far in the drink.'

"Well, any way, there was truth in this; so, accordingly, the reckoning was *ped*, and, as this was the thrate of the weddingers to the bride and bridegroom, every one of the men clubbed his share, but neither I nor the girls anything. Ha—ha—ha! Am I alive at all? I never—ha—ha—ha! I never laughed so much in one day as I did in that, and I can't help laughing at it yet! Well, well! when we all got on the top of our horses, and sich other iligant cattle as we had—the crowning of a king was nothing to it. We were now purty well, I thank you, as to liquor; and as the knot was tied, and all safe, there was no end to our good spirits; so, when we took the road, the men were in high blood, particularly Billy Cormick, the tailor, who had a

¹ Drunk.

pair of long cavaldry spurs upon him, that he was scarcely able to walk in—and he not more nor four feet high. The women, too, were in blood, having faces upon them, with the hate of the day and the liquor, as full as trumpeters.

“There was now a great jealousy among them that were bint for winning the bottle; and when one horseman would cross another, striving to have the whip hand of him when they'd set off, why, you see, his horse would get a cut of the whip itself for his pains. My uncle and I, however, did all we could to pacify them; and their own bad horsemanship, and the screeching of the women, prevented any strokes at that time. Some of them were ripping up ould sores against one another as they went along; others, particularly the youngsters, with their sweethearts behind them, coorting away for the life of them; and some might be heard miles off, singing and laughing; and you may be sure the fiddler behind my uncle wasn't idle no more nor another. In this way we dashed on gloriously, till we came in sight of the Dumbhill, where we were to start for the bottle. And now you might see the men fixing themselves on their saddles, sacks, and suggawns; and the women tying kerchiefs and shawls about their caps and bonnets to keep them from flying off, and then gripping their fore-riders hard and fast by the bosoms. When we got to the Dumbhill there were five or six fellows that didn't come with us to the priest's, but met us with cudgels in their hands, to prevent any of them from starting before the others, and to show fair play.

“Well, when they were all in a lump—horses, mules, ragherays, and asses—some, as I said, with saddles, some with none; and all jist as I tould you before—the word was given, and off they scoured, myself along with the rest; and divil be off me, if ever I saw such another sight but itself before or since. Off they skelped through thick and thin, in a cloud of dust like a mist about us; but it was a mercy that the life wasn't trampled out of some of us; for before we had gone fifty perches the one-third of them were sprawling atop of one another on the road. As for the women, they went down right and left—sometimes bringing the horsemen with them; and many of the boys getting black eyes and bloody noses on the stones. Some of them, being half blind with the motion and the whisky, turned off the wrong way, and galloped on, thinking they had completely distanced the crowd; and it wasn't until they cooled a bit that they found out their mistake.

“But the best sport of all was when they came to the *Lazy*

Corner, jist at Jack Gallagher's *flush*,¹ where the water came out a good way across the road ; being in such a flight, they either forgot or didn't know how to turn the angle properly, and plash went above thirty of them, coming down right on the top of one another, souse in the pool. By this time there was about a dozen of the best horsemen a good distance before the rest, cutting one another up for the bottle. Among these were the Dorans and Flanagans; but they, you see, wisely enough dropped their women at the beginning, and only rode single. I myself didn't mind the bottle, but kept close to Mary, for fraid that, among sich a devil's pack of half-mad fellows, anything might happen her. At any rate I was next the first batch : but where do you think the tailor was all this time? Why, away off like lightning, miles before them—flying like a swallow ; and how he kept his sate so long has puzzled me from that day to this. But, anyhow, truth's best—there he was topping the hill ever so far before them. After all the unlucky crathur nearly missed the bottle, for when he turned to the bride's house, instead of pulling up as he ought to do—why, to show his horsemanship to the crowd that was out looking at them, he should begin to cut up the horse right and left, until he made him take the garden ditch in full flight, landing him among the cabbages. About four yards or five from the spot where the horse lodged himself was a well, and a purty deep one too, by my word ; but not a sowl present could tell what become of the tailor, until Owen Smith chanced to look into the well, and saw his long spurs jist above the water ; so he was pulled up in a purty pickle, not worth the washing ; but what did he care? although he had a small body, the sorra one of him but had a sowl big enough for Golias or Sampson the Great.

“As soon as he got his eyes clear, right or wrong, he insisted on getting the bottle. But he was late, poor fellow, for before he got out of the garden two of them cums up—Paddy Doran and Peter Flanagan, cutting one another to pieces, and not the length of your nail between them. Well, well, that was a terrible day, sure enough. In the twinkling of an eye they were both off the horses, the blood streaming from their bare heads, struggling to take the bottle from my father, who didn't know which of them to give it to. He knew if he'd hand to one the other would take offence, and then he was in a great puzzle, striving to razon with

¹ Flush is a pool of water that spreads nearly across a road. It is usually fed by a small mountain stream, and in consequence of rising and falling rapidly, it is called “ Flush.”

them; but long Paddy Doran caught it while he was spaking to Flanagan, and the next instant Flanagan measured him with a heavy loaded whip, and left him stretched upon the stones. And now the work began, for by this time the friends of both parties came up and joined them. Such knocking down, such roaring among the men, and screeching and clapping of hands and wiping of heads among the women when a brother, or a son, or a husband would get his gruel. Indeed, out of a fair I never saw anything to come up to it. But during all this work the busiest man among the whole set was the tailor, and what was worse of all for the poor crathur, he should single himself out against both parties, bekase you see he thought they were cutting him out of his right to the bottle.

"They had now broken up the garden gate for weapons, all except one of the posts, and fought into the garden; when nothing should sarve Billy but to take up the large heavy post, as if he could destroy the whole faction on each side. Accordingly, he came up to big Matthew Flanagan, and was rising it jist as if he'd fell him, when Matt, catching him by the nape of the neck and the waistband of the breeches, went over very quietly and dropped him a second time, heels up, into the well, where he might have been yet, only for my mother-in-law, who dragged him out with a great deal to do; for the well was too narrow to give him room to turn.

"As for myself and all my friends, as it happened to be my own wedding, and at our own place, we couldn't take part with either of them; but we endeavoured all in our power to *red*¹ them, and a tough task we had of it, until we saw a pair of whips going hard and fast among them, belonging to Father Corrigan and Father James, his curate. Well, it's wonderful how soon a priest can clear up a quarrel! In five minutes there wasn't a hand up—instead of that they were ready to run into mouse-holes.

"'What, you murderers,' says his reverence, 'are you bint to have each other's blood upon your heads, ye vile infidels, ye cursed unchristian Antherntarians? are you going to get yourselves hanged like sheep-stalers? down with your sticks, I command you. Do you know—will ye give yourselves time to see who's spaking to you, you bloodthirsty set of Episcopalian? I command you, in the name of the Catholic Church and the Blessed Virgin Mary, to stop this instant, if you don't wish me,' says he, 'to turn you into stocks and stones where

¹ Separate or pacify.

you stand, and make world's wonders of you as long as you live. Doran, if you rise your hand more, I'll strike it dead on your body, and to your mouth you'll never carry it while you have breath in your carcass,' says he. 'Clear off, you Flanagans, you butchers you, or by St. Dominick I'll turn the heads round upon your bodies in the twinkling of an eye, so that you'll not be able to look a quiet Christian in the face again. Pretty respect you have for the decent couple in whose house you have kicked up such a hubbub! Is this the way people are to be deprived of their dinners on your accounts, you fungaleering thieves?'

"'Why then, plase your reverence, by the—hem—I say, Father Corrigan, it wasn't my fault, but that villain Flanagan's, for he knows I fairly won the bottle—and would have distanced him, only that when I was far before him, the vagabone, he galloped across me on the way, thinkin' to thrip up the horse.'

"'You lying scoundrel,' says the priest, 'how dare you tell me a falsity,' says he, 'to my face? how could he gallop across you if you were far before him? Not a word more, or I'll leave you without a mouth to your face, which will be a double share of provision and bacon saved anyway. And Flanagan, *you* were as much to blame as he, and must be chastised for your raggamuffinly conduct,' says he, 'and so must you both, and all your party, particularly you and he, as the ringleaders. Right well I know it's the grudge upon the lawsuit you had, and not the bottle, that occasioned it; but, by St. Peter, to Loughderg both of you must tramp for this.'

"'Ay, and by St. Pether, they both deserve it as well as a thief does the gallows,' said a little blustering voice belonging to the tailor, who came forward in a terrible passion, looking for all the world like a drowned rat. 'Ho, by St. Pether, they do, the vagabones; for it was myself that won the bottle, your reverence; and by this and by that,' says he, 'the bottle I'll have, or some of their crowns will crack for it; blood or whisky I'll have, your reverence, and I hope that you'll assist me!'

"'Why, Billy, are you here?' says Father Corrigan, smiling down upon the figure the fellow cut, with his long spurs and his big whip—'what in the world tempted *you* to get on horseback, Billy?'

"'By the powers, I was miles before them,' says Billy, 'and after this day, your reverence, let no man say that I couldn't ride a steeplechase across Crocknagooran.'

"'Why, Billy, how did you stick on, at all at all,' says his reverence.

" 'How do I know how I stuck on,' says Billy, 'nor whether I stuck on at all or not?—all I know is that I was on horseback before leaving the Dumbhill, and that I found them pulling me by the heels out of the well in the corner of the garden, and that, your reverence, when the first was only topping the hill there below, as Lanty Magowran tells me, who was looking on.'

" 'Well, Billy,' says Father Corrigan, 'you must get the bottle; and as for you Dorans and Flanagans, I'll make examples of you for this day's work—that you may reckon on. You are a disgrace to the parish, and what's more, a disgrace to your priest. How can luck or grace attend the marriage of any young couple that there's such work at? Before you leave this you must all shake hands, and promise never to quarrel with each other while grass grows or water runs; and if you don't, by the blessed St. Dominick, I'll *exkinnicate* ye both, and all belonging to you into the bargain; so that ye'll be the pitiful examples and shows to all that look upon you.'

" 'Well, well, your reverence,' says my father-in-law, 'let all bygones be bygones; and, please God, they will before they go be better friends than ever they were. Go now and clane yourselves, take the blood from about your faces, for the dinner's ready an hour ago; but if you all respect the place you're in, you'll show it, in regard of the young crathurs that's going, in the name of God, to face the world together, and of coorse wishes that this day at laste should pass in pace and quietness. Little did I think there was any friend or neighbour here that would make so little of the place or people, as was done for nothing at all, in the face of the country.'

" 'God he sees,' says my mother-in-law, 'that there's them here this day we didn't deserve this from, to rise such a *norration*, as if the house was a shebeen or a public-house! It's myself didn't think either me or my poor colleen here, not to mention the dacent people she's joined to, would be made so little of as to have our place turned into a play-acthur—for a play-acthur couldn't be worse.'

" 'Well,' says my uncle, 'there's no help for spilt milk, I tell you, nor for spilt blood either; tare-an-ouny, sure we're all Irishmen, relations, and Catholics through other, and we oughtn't to be this way. Come away to dinner—by the powers, we'll duck the first man that says a loud word for the remainder of the day. Come, Father Corrigan, and carve the goose, or the geese, for us—for, by my sannies, I bleeve there's a baker's dozen of them; but we've plenty of *Latin* for them, and your

reverence and Father James here understands that langidge, anyhow—larned enough there, I think, gintlemen.'

"'That's right, Brian,' shouts the tailor—'that's right; there must be no fighting: by the powers, the first man that attempts it, I'll brain him—fell him to the earth like an ox, if all belonging to him was in my way.'

"This threat from the tailor went further, I think, in putting them into good humour nor even what the priest said. They then washed and claned themselves, and accordingly went to their dinners. Billy himself marched with his terrible whip in his hand, and his long cavaldry spurs sticking near ten inches behind him, draggled to the tail like a bantling cock after a shower. But maybe there was more draggled tails and bloody noses nor poor Billy's, or even nor was occasioned by the fight; for after Father Corrigan had come several of them dodged up, some with broken shins and heads, and wet clothes, that they'd got on the way by the mischances of the race, particularly at the *Flush*. But I don't know how it was; somehow the people in them days didn't value these things a straw. They were far hardier then nor they are now, and never went to law, at all at all. Why, I've often known skulls to be broken, and the people to die afterwards, and there would be nothing more about it, except to brake another skull or two for it; but neither *crowner's quest*, nor judge, nor jury was ever troubled at all about it. And so sign's on it, people were then innocent, and not up to law and counsellors as they are now. If a person happened to be killed in a fight at a fair or market, why he had only to appear after his death to one of his friends, and get a number of masses offered up for his sowl, and all was right; but now the times are clane altered, and there's nothing but hanging and transporting for such things; although that won't bring the people to life again."

"I suppose," said Andy Morrow, "you had a famous dinner, Shane."

"'Tis you that may say that, Mr. Morrow," replied Shane; "but the house, you see, wasn't able to hould one-half of us; so there was a dozen or two tables borrowed from the neighbours, and laid one after another in two rows, on the green, beside the river that ran along the garden hedge, side by side. At one end Father Corrigan sat, with Mary and myself, and Father James at the other. There were three five-gallon kegs of whisky, and I ordered my brother to take charge of them, and there he sat beside them, and filled the bottles as they were wanted, bekase, if he had left that job to strangers,

many a spalpeen there would make away with lots of it. Mayrone, such a sight as the dinner was! I didn't lay my eye on the fellow of it since, sure enough, and I'm now an ould man, though I was then a young one. Why, there was a pudding boiled in the end of a sack; and troth it was a thumper, only for the straws—for, you see, when they were making it, they had to draw long straws across in order to keep it from falling asunder: a fine plan it is, too. Jack M'Kenna, the carpenter, carved it with a hand-saw, and if he didn't curse the same straws, I'm not here. 'Draw them out, Jack,' said Father Corrigan—'draw them out. It's asy known, Jack, you never ate a polite dinner, you poor awkward spalpeen, or you'd have pulled out the straws the first thing you did, man alive.' Such lashins of corned beef, and rounds of beef, and legs of mutton, and bacon—turkeys and geese, and barn-door fowls, young and fat. They may talk as they will, but commend me to a piece of good ould bacon, ate with crock butther, and phaties and cabbage. Sure enough they leathered away at everything, but this and the pudding were the favourites. Father Corrigan gave up the carving in less than no time, for it would take him half a day to sarve them all, and he wanted to provide for number one. After helping himself, he set my uncle to it, and maybe he didn't slash away right and left. There was half-a-dozen gorsoons carrying about the beer in cans, with froth upon it like barm—but that was beer in arnest, Nancy—I'll say no more.

"When the dinner was over, you would think there was as much left as would sarve a regiment; and sure enough, a right hungry, ragged regiment was there to take care of it, though, to tell the truth, there was as much taken into Finigan's as would be sure to give us all a rousing supper. Why, there was such a troop of beggars—men, women, and childhre—sitting over on the sunny side of the ditch, as would make short work of the whole dinner had they got it. Along with Father Corrigan and me was my father and mother, and Mary's parents; my uncle, cousins, and nearest relations on both sides. Oh, it's Father Corrigan, God rest his sowl, he's *now* in glory, and so he was *then* also—how he did crow and laugh! 'Well, Matthew Finigan,' says he, 'I can't say but I'm happy that your *Colleen Bawn* here has lit upon a husband that's no discredit to the family—and it is herself didn't drive her pigs to a bad market,' says he. 'Why, in troth, Father, avourneen,' says my mother-in-law, 'they'd be hard to plase that couldn't be satisfied with them she got; not saying but she had her pick and choice of

many a good offer, and might have got richer matches; but Shane Fadh M'Cawell, although you're sitting there beside my daughter, I'm prouder to see you on my own flure, the husband of my child, nor if she'd got a man with four times your substance.'

"'Never heed the girls for knowing where to choose,' says his reverence, slyly enough; 'but, upon my word, only she gave us all the slip, to tell the truth, I had another husband than Shane in my eye for her, and that was my own nevvie, Father James's brother here.'

"'And I'd be proud of the connection,' says my father-in-law; 'but, you see, these girls won't look much to what you or I'll say in choosing a husband for themselves. How-and-iver, not making little of your nevvie, Father Michael, I say he's not to be compared with that same bouchal sittin' beside Mary there.' 'No, nor by the powers-o'-war, never will,' says Billy Cormick the tailor, who had come over and slipped in on the other side, betune Father Corrigan and the bride—'by the powers-o'-war, he'll never be fit to be compared with me, I tell you, till yesterday comes back again.'

"'Why, Billy,' says the priest, 'you're in every place.' 'But where I ought to be!' says Billy; 'and that's hard and fast tackled to Mary Bane, the bride here, instead of that steeple of a fellow she has got,' says the little cock.

"'Billy, I thought you were married,' said Father Corrigan.

"'Not I, your reverence,' says Billy; 'but I'll soon do something, Father Michael—I have been threatened this long time, but I'll do it at last.'

"'He's not exactly married, sir,' says my uncle; 'there's a colleen present' (looking at the bridesmaid) 'that will soon have his name upon her.'

"'Very good, Billy,' says the priest; 'I hope you will give us a rousing wedding—equal, at least, to Shane Fadh's.'

"'Why, then, your reverence, except I get such a darling as Molly Bane here—and by this and by that, it's you that *is* the darling, Molly ashore—what come over me, at all at all, that I didn't think of you?' says the little man, drawing closer to her, and poor Mary smiling good-naturedly at his spirit.

"'Well, and what if you *did* get such a darling as Molly Bane there?' says his reverence.

"'Why, except I get the likes of her for a wife—upon second thoughts, I don't like marriage, anyway,' said Billy, winking against the priest—'I'll lade such a life as your reverence; and, by the powers, it's a thousand pities that I wasn't made

into a priest instead of a tailor. For, you see, if I had,' says he, giving a verse of an old song—

“ ‘For, you see, if I had,
It's I'd be the lad
That would show all my people such larning;
And when they'd go wrong,
Why, instead of a song,
I'd give them a lump of a sarmin.’

“ ‘Billy,’ says my father-in-law, ‘why don't you make a hearty dinner, man alive? Go back to your sate and finish your male—you're aiting nothing to signify.’ ‘Me!’ says Billy—‘why, I'd scorn to ate a hearty dinner; and I'd have you to know, Matt Finigan, that it wasn't for the sake of your dinner I came here, but in regard to your family, and bekase I wished him well that's sitting beside your daughter; and it ill becomes your father's son to cast up your dinner in my face, or any one of my family; but a blessed minute longer I'll not stay among you. Give me your hand, Shane Fadh, and you, Mary—may goodness grant you pace and happiness every night and day you both rise out of your beds. I made that coat your husband has on his back beside you, and a betther fit was never made; but I didn't think it would come to my turn to have my dinner cast up this a-way, as if I was aiting it for charity.’

“ ‘Hut, Billy,’ says I, ‘sure it was all out of kindness; he didn't mane to offend you.’

“ ‘It's no matter,’ says Billy, beginning to cry; ‘he *did* offend me; and it's low days with me to bear an affront from him, or the likes of him; but by the powers-o'-war,’ says he, getting into a great rage, ‘I *won't* bear it—only as you're an old man yourself, I'll not rise my hand to you; but let any man now that has the heart to take up your quarrel come out and stand before me on the sod here.’

“ ‘Well, by this time you'd tie all that were present with three straws, to see Billy stripping himself, and his two wrists not thicker than drumsticks. While the tailor was raging, for he was pretty well up with what he had taken, another person made his appearance at the far end of the *boreen* that led to the green where we sot. He was mounted upon the top of a sack that was upon the top of a sober-looking baste enough, God knows; he jogging along at his ase, his legs dangling down from the sack on each side, and the long skirts of his coat hanging down behind him. Billy was now getting pacified,

bekase they gave way to him a little ; so the fun went round, and they sang, roared, danced, and coorted right and left.

"When the stranger came as far as the skirt of the green, he turned the horse over quite nathural to the wedding ; and sure enough, when he jogged up, it was Friar Rooney himself, with a sack of oats, for he had been *questin*.¹ Well, sure the ould people couldn't do less nor all go over to put the *failltah*² on him. 'Why, then,' says my father and mother-in-law, 'tis yourself, Friar Rooney, that's as welcome as the flowers of May ; and see who's here before you—Father Corrigan and Father Dollard.'

"'Thank you, thank you, Molshy—thank you, Matthew—troth, I know that 'tis I am welcome.'

"'Ay, and you're welcome again, Father Rooney,' said *my* father, going down and shaking hands with him, 'and I'm proud to see you here. Sit down, your reverence—here's everything that's good, and plinty of it, and if you don't make much of yourself, never say an ill fellow dealt with you.'

"The friar stood while my father was speaking, with a pleasant, contented face upon him, only a little roguish and droll.

"'Hah ! Shane Fadh,' says he, smiling dryly at me, 'you *did* them all, I see. You have her there, the flower of the parish, blooming beside you ; but I knew as much six months ago, ever since I saw you bid her good-night at the hawthorn. Who looked back so often, Mary, eh ? Ay, laugh and blush—do—throth, 'twas I that caught you, but you didn't see me, though. Well, a colleen, and if you did, too, you needn't be ashamed of your bargain, anyhow. You see, the way I came to persave yees that evening was this—but I'll tell it by-and-by. In the manetime,' says he, sitting down and attacking a fine piece of corn-beef and greens, 'I'll take care of a certain acquaintance of mine,' says he. 'How are you, reverend gentlemen of the *Secularity* ? You'll permit a poor friar to sit and ate his dinner in your presence, I humbly hope.'

"'Frank,' says Father Corrigan, 'lay your hand upon your conscience, or upon your stomach, which is the same thing, and tell us honestly how many dinners you ate on your travels among *my* parishioners this day.'

"'As I'm a sinner, Michael, this is the only thing to be called

¹ *Questin*—When an Irish priest or friar collects corn or money from the people in a gratuitous manner the act is called "*questin*."

² Welcome.

a dinner I ate this day. Shane Fadh—Mary, both your healths, and God grant you all kinds of luck and happiness, both here and hereafter! All your healths in ginerall; gintlemen *seculars*!’

“‘Thank you, Frank,’ said Father Corrigan. ‘How did you speed to-day?’”

“‘How can any man speed that comes after you?’ says the friar. ‘I’m after travelling the half of the parish for that poor bag of oats that you see standing against the ditch.’”

“‘In other words, Frank,’ says the priest, ‘you took *Althad-hawan* in your way, and in about half-a-dozen houses filled your sack, and then turned your horse’s head towards the good cheer, by way of *accident* only.’”

“‘And was it by way of accident, Mr. *Secular*, that I got you and that illoquent young gintleman, your curate, here before me? Do you feel that, man of the world? Father James, your health, though—you’re a good young man as far as saying nothing goes; but it’s better to sit still than rise up and fall, so I commend you for your *discretion*,’ says he; ‘but I’m afeard your master there won’t make you much fitter for the kingdom of heaven, anyhow.’”

“‘I believe, Father Corrigan,’ says my uncle, who loved to see the priest and the friar at it, ‘that you’ve met with your match—I think Father Rooney’s able for you.’”

“‘Oh, sure,’ says Father Corrigan, ‘he was joker to the college of the *Sorebones* in Paris; he got as much education as enabled him to say mass in Latin, and to beg oats in English, for his jokes.’”

“‘Troth, and,’ says the friar, ‘if you were to get your larning on the same terms you’d be guilty of very little knowledge; why, Michael, I never knew you to attempt a joke but once, and I was near shedding tears, there was something very sorrowful in it.’”

“‘This brought the laugh against the priest. ‘Your health, Molshy,’ says he, winking at my mother-in-law and then giving my uncle, who sat beside him, a *nudge*; ‘I believe, Brian, I’m giving it to him.’ ‘Tis yourself that is,’ says my uncle; ‘give him a wipe or two more.’ ‘Wait till he answers the last,’ says the friar.”

“‘He’s always joking,’ says Father James, ‘when he thinks he’ll make anything by it.’”

“‘Ay l’ says the friar, ‘then God help you both if you were left to your jokes for your feeding; for a poorer pair of gintlemen wouldn’t be found in Christendom.’”

“‘And I believe,’ says Father Corrigan, ‘if you depinded for your feeding upon your divinity instead of your jokes you’d be as poor as a man in the last stage of a consumption.’

“This threw the laugh against the friar, who smiled himself; but he was a dry man that never laughed much.

“‘Sure,’ says the friar, who was never at a loss, ‘I have yourself and your nephew for examples that it’s possible to live and be well fed without divinity.’

“‘At any rate,’ says my uncle, putting in *his* tongue, ‘I think you’re both very well able to make divinity a joke betune you,’ says he.

“‘Well done, Brian,’ says the friar, ‘and so they are, for I believe it is the only subject they can joke upon; and I beg your pardon, Michael, for not excepting it before; on that subject I allow you to be humorous.’

“‘If that be the case, then,’ says Father Corrigan, ‘I must give up your company, Frank, in order to avoid the force of bad example; for you’re so much in the habit of joking on everything else that you’re not able to except even divinity.’

“‘You may aisily give *me* up,’ says the friar, ‘but how will you be able to forget Father Corrigan. I’m afeard you will find *his* acquaintance as great a detriment to yourself as it is to others in that respect.’

“‘What makes you say,’ says Father James, who was more in arnest than the rest, ‘that my uncle won’t make me fit for the kingdom of heaven?’

“‘I had a pair of rasons for it, Jimmy,’ says the friar: ‘one is, that he doesn’t understand the subject himself; and another is, that you haven’t capacity for it, even if he did. You’ve a want of nathural parts—a whackum here,’ pointing to his forehead.

“‘I beg your pardon, Frank,’ says Father James, ‘I deny your premises, and I’ll now argue in Latin with you, if you wish, upon any subject you please.’

“‘Come, then,’ says the friar—‘*Kid-eat-ivy mare-eat-hay.*’

“‘Kid—what?’ says the other.

“‘*Kid-eat-ivy mare-eat-hay,*’ answers the friar.

“‘I don’t know what you’re at,’ says Father James; ‘but I’ll argue in Latin with you as long as you wish.’

“‘Tut, man,’ says Father Rooney, ‘Latin’s for schoolboys; but come, now, I’ll take you in another language—I’ll try you in Greek—*In-mud-eel-is in-clay-none-is in-fir-tar-is in-oak-none-is.*’

“The curate looked at him, amazed, not knowing what

answer to make. At last says he, 'I don't profess to know Greek, bekase I never larned it—but stick to the Latin, and I'm not afeard of you.'

"'Well, then,' says the friar, 'I'll give you a trial at that—*Afflat te canis ter—Forte dux fel flat in guther.*'

"'A flat-tay-cannisther—Forty ducks fell flat in the gutthers!' says Father James—'why, that's English!'

"'English!' says the friar; 'oh, good-bye to you, Mr. Secular; if that's your knowledge of Latin, you're an honour to your tachers and to your cloth.'

"Father Corrigan now laughed heartily at the puzzling the friar gave Father James. 'James,' says he, 'never heed him; he's only pesthering you with bog-latin; but, at any rate, to do him justice, he's not a bad scholar, I can tell you that. . . . Your health, Frank, you droll crathur—your health. I have only one fault to find with you, and that is, that you fast and mortify yourself too much. Your fasting has reduced you from being formerly a friar of very genteel dimensions to a cut of corpulency that smacks strongly of penance—fifteen stone at least.'

"'Why,' says the friar, looking down, quite plased entirely, at the cut of his own waist, which, among ourselves, was no trifle, and giving a growl of a laugh—the most he ever gave; 'if what you pray here benefits you in the next life as much as what I fast does me in this, it will be well for the world in general, Michael.'

"'How can *you* say, Frank,' says Father James, 'with such a carkage as that, that you're a *poor* friar? Upon my credit, when you die, I think the angels will have a job of it in wafting you upwards.'

"'Jimmy, man, was it *you* that said it?—why, my light's beginning to shine upon you, or you never could have got out so much,' says Father Rooney, putting his hands over his brows and looking up toardst him. 'But if you ever read scripthur, which I suppose you're not overburdened with, you would know that it says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," but not blessed are the poor in flesh—now, mine is spiritual poverty.'

"'Very true, Frank,' says Father Corrigan, 'I believe there's a great dearth and poverty of spirituality about you, sure enough. But of all kinds of poverty, commend me to a friar's. Voluntary poverty's something, but it's the divil entirely for a man to be poor against his will. You friars boast of this voluntary poverty; but if there's a fat bit in any part of the parish, we, that are the lawful clargy, can't eat it but you're

sure to drop in, just in the nick of time, with your voluntary poverty.'

"'I'm sure, if we do,' says the friar, 'it's nothing out of *your* pocket, Michael. I declare, I believe you begrudge us the air we breathe. But don't you know very well that our ordhers are apostolic, and that, of coorse, we have a more primitive appearance than you have.'

"'No such thing,' says the other; 'you, and the parsons, and the fat bishops, are too far from the right place—the only difference between you is that you are fat and lazy *by toleration*, whereas the others are fat and lazy *by authority*. You are fat and lazy on your ould horses, jogging about from house to house, and stuffing yourselves either at the table of other people's parishioners, or in your own convents in Dublin and elsewhere. *They* are rich, bloated gluttons, going about in their coaches, and wallying in wealth. Now, *we* are the golden mean, Frank, that live upon a little, and work hard for it. But, plase God, the day will come when we will step into their places, and be as we used to be.'

"'Why, you cormorant,' says the friar, a little nettled, for the dhrop was beginning to get up into his head—'sure, if we're fat *by toleration*, we're only *tolerably* fat, my worthy secular; but how can *you* condemn them, when you only want to get into their places, or have the face to tax any one with living upon the people?'

"'You see,' says the friar, in a whisper to my uncle, 'how I sobered them in the larning, and they are good scholars for all that, but not near so deep read as myself. Michael,' says he, 'now that I think on it—sure I'm to be at Denis O'Flaherty's *Month's mind* on Thursday next.'

"'Indeed, I would not doubt you,' says Father Corrigan. 'You wouldn't be apt to miss it.'

"'Why, the widdy Flaherty asked me yesterday, and I think that's proof enough that I'm not going unsent for.'

"By this time the company was hard and fast at the punch, the songs, and the dancing. The dinner had been cleared off, except what was before the friar, who held out wonderfully, and the beggars and shulers were clawing and scoulding one another about the divide. The dacentest of us went into the house for a while, taking the fiddler with us, and the rest stayed on the green to dance, where they were soon joined by lots of the counthry people, so that in a short time there was a large number entirely. After sitting for some time within, Mary and I began, you may be sure, to get unasy, sitting palavering

among a parcel of ould sober folks ; so at last out we slipped, and the few other dacent young people that were with us, to join the dance and shake our toe along with the rest of them. When we made our appearance, the flure was instantly cleared for us, and then she and I danced the *Humours of Glin*.

"Well, it's no matter—it's all past now, and she lies low ; but I may say that it wasn't very often danced in better style since, I'd wager. Lord bless us—what a drame the world is ! The darling of my heart you war, avourneen machree. I think I see her with the modest smile upon her face, straight, and fair, and beautiful ; and—hem—and when the dance was over, how she stood leaning upon me, and my heart within melting to her, and the look she'd give into my eyes and my heart too, as much as to say, this is the happy day with me ; and the blush still would fly across her face when I'd press her, unknownst to the bystanders, against my beating heart. A suilish machree, she is now gone from me—lies low, and it all appears like a drame to me ; but—hem—God's will be done !—sure she's happy !—och, och !

"Many a shake hands did I get from the neighbours' sons, wishing me joy—and I'm sure I couldn't do less than thrate them to a glass, you know ; and 'twas the same way with Mary. Many a neighbour's daughter, that she didn't do more nor know by eyesight maybe, would come up and wish her happiness in the same manner, and she would say to me, 'Shane, avourneen, that's such a man's daughter—they're dacent friendly people, and we can't do less nor give her a glass.' I, of coorse, would go down and bring them over, after a little pulling—making, you see, as if they wouldn't come—to where my brother was handing out the native.

"In this way we passed the time till the evening came on, except that Mary and the bridesmaid were sent for to dance with the priests, who were within at the punch, in all their glory—Friar Rooney along with them, as jolly as a prince. I and my man, on seeing this, were for staying with the company ; but my mother, who 'twas that came for them, says, 'Never mind the boys, Shane ; come in with the girls, I say. You're just wanted at the present time, both of you ; follow me for an hour or two, till their reverences within have a bit of a dance with the girls in the back room—we don't want to gather a crowd about them.' Well, we went in, sure enough, for a while ; but, I don't know how it was, I didn't at all feel comfortable with the priests ; for, you see, I'd rather sport my day with the boys and girls upon the green. So I gives Jack *the hard*

word,¹ and in we went, when, behold you, there was Father Corrigan planted upon the side of a *settle*, Mary along with him, both waiting till they'd have a fling of a dance together, whilst the curate was capering on the flure before the bridesmaid, who was a purty dark-haired girl, to the tune of 'Kiss my lady,' and the friar planted between my mother and mother-in-law, one of his legs stretched out on a chair, he singing some funny song or other, that brought the tears to their eyes with laughing.

"Whilst Father James was dancing with the bridesmaid I gave Mary the wink to come away from Father Corrigan, wishing, as I tould you, to get out amongst the youngsters once more; and Mary herself, to tell the truth, although he was the priest, was very willing to do so. I went over to her and says, 'Mary, asthore, there's a friend without that wishes to spake to you.'

"'Well,' says Father Corrigan, 'tell that friend that she's better employed, and that they must wait, whoever they are. I'm giving your wife, Shane,' says he, 'a little good advice that she won't be the worse for, and she can't go now.'

"Mary in the meantime had got up, and was coming away, when his reverence wanted her to stay till they'd finish their dance. 'Father Corrigan,' says she, 'let me go now, sir, if you plase, for they would think it bad threatment of me not to go out to them.'

"'Troth, and you'll do no such thing, acushla,' says he, spaking so sweet to her; 'let them come in if they want you. Shane,' says his reverence, winking at me, and spaking in a whisper, 'stay here, you and the girls, till we take a hate at the dancing—don't you know that the ould women here and me will have to talk over some things about the fortune; you'll maybe get more nor you expect. Here, Molshy,' says he to my mother-in-law, 'don't let the youngsters out of this.'

"'Musba, Shane, ahagur,' says the ould woman, 'why will yees go and lave the place? Sure you needn't be dashed before them—they'll dance themselves.'

"Accordingly we stayed in the room; but just on the word Mary gives one spring away, laving his reverence by himself on the *settle*. 'Come away,' says she; 'lave them there, and let us go to where I can have a dance with yourself, Shane.'

"Well, I always loved Mary; but at that minute, if it would save her, I think I could spill my heart's blood for her.

¹ A pass-word, sign, or brief intimation, touching something of which a man is ignorant, that he may act accordingly.

'Mary,' says I, full to the throat, 'Mary, *acushla agus asthore machree*,¹ I could lose my life for you.'

"She looked in my face, and the tears came into her eyes. 'Shane, achora,' says she, 'amn't I *your happy* girl, at last?' She was leaning over against my breast; and what answer do you think I made?—I pressed her to my heart. I did more—I *took off my hat, and, looking up to God, I thanked him with tears in my eyes for giving me such a treasure.* 'Well, come now,' says she, 'to the green.' So we went—and it's she that was the girl, when she did go among them, that threw them all into the dark for beauty and figure. As fair as a lily itself did she look—so tall and illegant that you wouldn't think she was a farmer's daughter at all; so we left the priests dancing away, for we could do no good before them.

"When we had danced an hour or so, them that the family had the greatest regard for were brought in, unknownst to the rest, to drink tay. Mary planted herself beside me, and would sit nowhere else; but the friar got beside the bridesmaid, and I surely observed that many a time she'd look over, likely to split, at Mary, and it's Mary herself that gave her many's a wink to come to the other side; but, you know, out of manners, she was obliged to sit quietly, though, among ourselves, it's she that was like a hen on a hot griddle, beside the ould chap. It was now that the bride's-cake was got. Old Sonsy Mary marched over, and, putting the bride on her feet, got up on a chair and broke it over her head, giving round a *fadge*² of it to every young person in the house, and they again to their acquaintances; but, lo and behold you, who should insist on getting a whang of it but the friar, which he rolled up in a piece of paper and put it in his pocket. 'I'll have good fun,' says he, 'dividing this to-morrow among the *colleens* when I'm collecting my oats—the sorra one of me but 'll make them give me the worth of it of something, if it was only a fat hen or a square of bacon.' After tay the ould folk got full of talk; the youngsters danced round them; the friar sung like a thrush, and told many a droll story. The tailor had got drunk a little too early, and had to be put to bed; but he was now as fresh as ever, and able to dance a hornpipe, which he did on a door. The Dorans and the Flanagans had got quite thick after drubbing one another—Ned Doran began his courtship with Alley Flanagan on that day, and they were married soon after, so that the two factions joined, and never had another

¹ The very pulse and delight of my heart.

² A liberal portion torn off a thick cake.

battle until the day of her berrial, when they were at it as fresh as ever. Several of those that were at the wedding were lying drunk about the ditches, or roaring and swaggering and singing about the place. The night falling, those that were dancing on the green removed to the barn. Father Corrigan and Father James weren't ill off; but as for the friar, although he was as pleasant as a lark, there was hardly any such thing as making him tipsy. Father Corrigan wanted him to dance. 'What!' says he; 'would you have me to bring on an earthquake, Michael?—but who ever heard of a follower of St. Dom'nick, bound by his vow to voluntary poverty and mortifications—young couple, your health—will anybody tell me who mixed this, for they've knowledge worth a folio of the fathers?—poverty and mortifications, going to shake his heel? By the bones of St. Dom'nick, I'd desarme to be suspinded if I did. Will no one tell me who mixed this, I say, for they had a jewel of a hand at it? Och—

“ ‘Let parsons prache and pray—
 Let priests, too, pray and prache, sir;
 What's the rason they
 Don't practise what they tache, sir?
 Forral, orrall, loll,
 Forral, orrall, laddy—

Sho da slainthak ma collenee agus ma bouchalee. Hoigh, oigh, oigh—healths all, gintlemen seculars! Molshy,' says the friar to my mother-in-law, 'send that *bocaun*¹ to bed—poor fellow, he's almost off—rouse yourself, James! It's aisy to see that he's but young at it yet—that's right—he's sound asleep—just toss him into bed, and in an hour or so he'll be as fresh as a daisy.

“ ‘Let parsons prache and pray—
 Forral, orrall, loll——'

“ ‘For dear's sake, Father Rooney,' says my uncle, running in in a great hurry, 'keep yourself quiet a little; here's the Squire and Master Francis coming over to fulfil their promise. He would have come up airlier, he says, but that he was away all day at the 'sizes.'

“ ‘Very well,' says the friar; 'let him come—who's afeard?—mind yourself, Michael.'

“ In a minute or two they came in, and we all rose up, of

¹ A soft, unsophisticated youth.

coorse, to welcome them. The Squire *shuck* hands with the ould people, and afterwards with Mary and myself, wishing us all happiness—then with the two clergymen, and introduced Master Frank to them; and the friar made the young chap sit beside him. The masther then took a sate himself, and looked on while they were dancing with a smile of good humour on his face—while they, all the time, would give new touches and trebles, to show off all their steps before him. He was landlord both to my father and father-in-law; and it's he that was the good man, and the gintleman, every inch of him. They may all talk as they will, but commend me, Mr. Morrow, to one of the old squires of former times for a landlord. The priests, with all their larning, were nothing to him for good breeding—he appeared so free, and so much at his ase, and even so respectful, that I don't think there was one in the house but would put their two hands under his feet to do him a sarvice.

“When he sat a while my mother-in-law came over with a glass of nice punch that she had mixed, at last equal to what the friar praised so well, and making a low curtsy, begged pardon for using such freedom with his honour, but hoped that he would just taste a little to the happiness of the young couple. He then drank our healths, and *shuck* hands with us both a second time, saying—although I can't, at all at all, give it in anything like his own words—‘I am glad,’ says he to Mary's parents, ‘that your daughter has made such a good choice’—throth, he did—the Lord be merciful to his sowl—God forgive me for what I was going to say, and he a Protestant;—but if ever one of yees went to heaven, Mr. Morrow, he did—‘such a prudent choice; and I congr—con—grathulate you,’ says he to my father, ‘on your connection with so industrious and respectable a family. You are now beginning the world for yourselves,’ says he to Mary and me, ‘and I cannot propose a better example to you both than that of your respective parents. From this forrid,’ says he, ‘I'm to considher you my tenants; and I wish to take this opportunity of informing you both that should you act up to the opinion I entertain of you, by an attentive coorse of industry and good management, you will find in me an encouraging and indulgent landlord. I know, Shane,’ says he to me, smiling, a little knowingly enough too, ‘that you have been a little wild or so, but that's past, I trust. You have now serious duties to perform, which you cannot neglect—but you will not neglect them; and be assured, I say again, that I shall feel pleasure in rendhering you every assistance in my power in the *cultivation* and improvement of

your farm.' 'Go over, both of you,' says my father, 'and thank his honour, and promise to do everything he says.' Accordingly, we did so; I made my scrape as well as I could, and Mary blushed to the eyes and dropped her curtsy.

"'Ah!' says the friar, 'see what it is to have a good landlord and a Christian gentleman to dale with. This is the feeling which should always bind a landlord and his tenants together. If I know your character, Squire Whitethorn, I believe you're not the man that would put a Protestant tenant over the head of a Catholic one, which shows, sir, your own good sense; for what is a difference of religion when people do what they ought to do? Nothing but the name. I trust, sir, we shall meet in a better place than this—both Protestant and Catholic.'

"'I am happy, sir,' says the Squire, 'to hear such principles from a man who I thought was bound by his creed to hould different opinions.'

"'Ah, sir!' says the friar, 'you little know who you're talking to, if you think so. I happened to be collecting a taste of oats, with the permission of my friend, Doctor Corrigan here, for I'm but a poor friar, sir, and dropped in *by mere accident*; but you know the hospitality of our country, Squire; and that's enough—go they would not allow me, and I was mintoning to this young gentleman, your son, how we collected the oats, and he insisted on my calling—a generous, noble child! I hope, sir, you have got proper instructors for him?'

"'Yes,' said the Squire; 'I'm taking care of that point'

"'What do you think, sir, but he insists on my calling over to-morrow, that he may give me *his* share of oats, as I told him that I was a friar, and that he was a little parishioner of mine; but I added that that wasn't right of him, without his papa's consint.'

"'Well, sir,' says the Squire, 'as he has promised, I will support him; so if you'll ride over to-morrow, you shall have a *sack* of oats—at all events, I shall send you a sack in the coorse of the day.'

"'I humbly thank you, sir,' says Father Rooney; 'and I thank my noble little parishioner for his ginerosity to the poor ould friar. God mark you to grace, my dear; and wherever you go, take the ould man's blessing along with you.'

"They then bid us good-night, and we all rose and saw them to the door.

"Father Corrigan now appeared 'to be getting sleepy. While this was going on I looked about me, but couldn't see

Mary. The tailor was just beginning to get a little hearty once more. Supper was talked of, but there was no one that could ate anything; even the friar was against it. The clargy now got their horses, the friar laving his oats behind him; for we promised to send them home, and something more along with them the next day. Father James was roused up, but could hardly stir with a *heddick*. Father Corrigan was correct enough; but when the friar got up he ran a little to the one side, upsetting Sonsy Mary, that sot a little beyond him. He then called over my mother-in-law to the dresser, and after some *collogin*¹ she slipped two fat fowl, that had never been touched, into one of his coat pockets, that was big enough to hould a leg of mutton. My father then called me over, and said, 'Shane,' says he, 'hadn't you better slip Father Rooney a bottle or two of that whisky; there's plenty of it there that wasn't touched, and you won't be a bit the poorer of it, maybe, this day twelve months.' I accordingly dhropped two bottles of it into the other pocket, for his reverence wanted a *balance*, anyhow.

"'Now,' says he, 'before I go, kneel down both of you, till I give you my benediction.'

"We accordingly knelt down, and he gave us his blessing in Latin—my father standing at his shoulder to keep him steady.

"After they went Mary threw the stocking—all the unmarried folks coming in the dark to see who it would hit. Bless my sowl, but she was the droll Mary—for what did she do, only put a big brogue of her father's into it, that was near two pounds weight; and who should it hit on the bare sconce but Billy Cormick, the tailor—who thought he was fairly shot, for it levelled the crathur at once, though that wasn't hard to do, anyhow.

"This was the last ceremony; and Billy was well continted to get the knock, for you all know whoever the stocking strikes upon is to be marrid first. After this my mother and mother-in-law set them to the dancing—and 'twas themselves that kept it up till long after daylight the next morning—but first they called me in to the next room where Mary was: and—and so ends my wedding; by the same token that I'm as dry as a stick."

"Come, Nancy," says Andy Morrow, "replenish again for us all, with a double measure for Shane Fadh—because he well deserves it."

¹ Whispering.

"Why, Shane," observed Alick, "you must have a terrible fine memory of your own, or you couldn't tell it all so exact."

"There's not a man in the four provinces has sich a memory," replied Shane. "I never hard that story yet, but I could repate it in fifty years afterwards. I could walk up any town in the kingdom, and let me look at the signs, and I would give them to you agin jist exactly as they stood."

Thus ended the account of Shane Fadh's wedding; and, after finishing the porter, they all returned home, with an understanding that they were to meet the next night in the same place.

THE HEDGE SCHOOL.

THERE never was a more unfounded calumny than that which would impute to the Irish peasantry an indifference to education. I may, on the contrary, fearlessly assert that the lower orders of no country ever manifested such a positive inclination for literary acquirements, and that, too, under circumstances strongly calculated to produce carelessness and apathy on this particular subject. Nay, I do maintain that he who is intimately acquainted with the character of our countrymen must acknowledge that their zeal for book learning not only is strong and ardent, when opportunities of scholastic education occur, but that it increases in proportion as these opportunities are rare and unattainable. The very name and nature of hedge schools are proof of this; for what stronger point could be made out, in illustration of my position, than the fact that, despite of obstacles whose very idea would crush ordinary enterprise—when not even a shed could be obtained in which to assemble the children of an Irish village, the worthy pedagogue selected the first green spot on the sunny side of a quickset hedge which he conceived adapted for his purpose, and there, under the scorching rays of a summer sun, and in defiance of spies and statutes, carried on the work of instruction. From this circumstance the name of hedge school originated; and, however it may be associated with the ludicrous, I maintain that it is highly creditable to the character of the people, and an encouragement to those who wish to see them receive pure and correct educational knowledge. A hedge school, however, in its original sense, was but a temporary establishment, being only adopted until such a schoolhouse could be erected as was in those days deemed sufficient to hold such a number of children as were expected, at all hazards, to attend it.

The opinion, I know, which has been long entertained of hedge schoolmasters was, and still is, unfavourable; but the character of these worthy and eccentric persons has been misunderstood, for the stigma attached to their want of knowledge should have rather been applied to their want of morals,

because on this latter point only were they indefensible. The fact is, that hedge schoolmasters were a class of men from whom morality was not expected by the peasantry ; for, strange to say, one of their strongest recommendations to the good opinion of the people, as far as their literary talents and qualifications were concerned, was an inordinate love of whisky, and if to this could be added a slight touch of derangement, the character was complete.

On once asking an Irish peasant why he sent his children to a schoolmaster who was notoriously addicted to spirituous liquors, rather than to a man of sober habits who taught in the same neighbourhood—

“Why do I send them to Mat Meegan, is it?” he replied ; “and do you think, sir,” said he, “that I’d send them to that dry-headed dunce, Mr. Frazher, with his black coat upon him, and his caroline hat, and him wouldn’t taste a glass of poteen wanst in seven years? Mat, sir, likes it, and taches the boys ten times bettther whin he’s dhrunk nor whin he’s sober ; and you’ll never find a good tacher, sir, but’s fond of it. As for Mat, when he’s *half gone*, I’d turn him agin the country for deepness in larning ; for it’s then he rhymes it out of him, that it would do one good to hear him.”

“So,” said I, “you think that a love of drinking poteen is a sign of talent in a schoolmaster.”

“Ay, or in any man else, sir,” he replied. “Look at tradesmen, and ’tis always the cleverest that you’ll find fond of the dhrink ! If you had hard Mat and Frazher the other evening at it—what a hare Mat made of him ; but he was jist in proper tune for it, being at the time purty well, I thank you, and did not lave him a leg to stand upon. He took him in Euclid’s Ailments and Logicals, and proved in Frazher’s teeth that the candlestick before them was the church-steeple, and Frazher himself the parson ; and so sign was on it, the other couldn’t disprove it, but had to give in.”

“Mat, then,” I observed, “is the most learned man on this walk.”

“Why, thin, I doubt that same, sir,” replied he, “for all he’s so great in the books ; for, you see, while they were ding dust at it, who comes in but mad Delany, and he attacked Mat, and in less than no time rubbed the consate out of *him*, as clane as *he* did out of Frazher.”

“Who is Delany?” I inquired.

“He was the makings of a priest, sir, and was in Maynooth a couple of years, but he took in the knowledge so fast that,

bedad, he got *cracked wid larnin'*—for a *dunce*, you see, never cracks wid it, in regard of the thickness of the skull. No doubt but he's too many for Mat, and can go far beyand him in the books ; but then, like that, he's still brightest whin he has a sup in his head."

These are prejudices which the Irish peasantry have long entertained concerning the character of hedge schoolmasters ; but granting them to be unfounded, as they generally are, yet it is an indisputable fact that hedge schoolmasters were as superior in literary knowledge and acquirements to the class of men who are now engaged in the general education of the people as they were beneath them in moral and religious character. The former part of this assertion will, I am aware, appear rather startling to many. But it is true ; and one great cause why the character of society teachers is undervalued, in many instances, by the people proceeds from a conviction on their part that they are, and must be, incapable, from the slender portion of learning they have received, of giving their children a sound and practical education.

But that we may put this subject in a clearer light, we will give a sketch of the course of instruction which was deemed necessary for a hedge schoolmaster, and let it be contrasted with that which falls to the lot of those engaged in the conducting of schools patronised by the Education Societies of the present day.

When a poor man, about twenty or thirty years ago, understood from the schoolmaster who educated his sons that any of them was particularly "'cute at his larnin'," the ambition of the parent usually directed itself to one of three objects—he would either make him a priest, a clerk, or a schoolmaster. The determination once fixed, the boy was set apart from every kind of labour, that he might be at liberty to bestow his undivided time and talents on the objects set before him. His parents strained every nerve to furnish him with the necessary books, and always took care that his appearance and dress should be more decent than those of any other member of the family. If the Church were in prospect, he was distinguished, after he had been two or three years at his Latin, by the appellation of "the young priest," an epithet to him of the greatest pride and honour ; but if destined only to wield the ferula, his importance in the family and the narrow circle of his friends was by no means so great. If, however, the goal of his future ambition as a schoolmaster was humbler, that of his literary career was considerably extended. He usually remained at the next school

in the vicinity until he supposed that he had completely drained the master of all his knowledge. This circumstance was generally discovered in the following manner:—As soon as he judged himself a match for his teacher, and possessed sufficient confidence in his own powers, he penned him a formal challenge to meet him in literary contest, either in his own school, before competent witnesses, or at the chapel-green, on the Sabbath day, before the arrival of the priest, or probably after it—for the priest himself was generally the moderator and judge upon these occasions. This challenge was generally couched in rhyme, and either sent by the hands of a common friend, or posted upon the chapel door.

These contests, as the reader perceives, were always public, and were witnessed by the peasantry with intense interest. If the master sustained a defeat, it was not so much attributed to his want of learning as to the overwhelming talent of his opponent; nor was the success of the pupil generally followed by the expulsion of the master—for this was but the first of a series of challenges which the former proposed to undertake, ere he eventually settled himself in the exercise of his profession.

I remember being present at one of them, and a ludicrous exhibition it was. The parish priest, a red-faced, jocular little man, was president, and his curate, a scholar of six feet two inches in height, and a schoolmaster from the next parish were judges. I will only touch upon two circumstances in their conduct which evinced a close instinctive knowledge of human nature in the combatants. The master would not condescend to argue off his throne—a piece of policy to which, in my opinion, he owed his victory (for he won); whereas the pupil insisted that he should meet him on equal ground, face to face, in the lower end of the room. It was evident that the latter could not divest himself of his boyish terrors as long as the other sat, as it were, in the plenitude of his former authority, contracting his brows with habitual sternness, thundering out his arguments with a most menacing and stentorian voice, while he thumped his desk with his shut fist, or struck it with his great rule at the end of each argument, in a manner that made the youngster put his hands behind him several times, to be certain that that portion of his dress which is *unmentionable* was tight upon him.

If in these encounters the young candidate for the honours of the literary sceptre was not victorious, he again resumed his studies under his old preceptor with renewed vigour and becoming humility; but if he put the schoolmaster down, his

next object was to seek out some other teacher whose celebrity was unclouded within his own range. With him he had a fresh encounter, and its result was similar to what I have already related. If victorious, he sought out another and more learned opponent; and if defeated, he became the pupil of his conqueror—going night-about, during his sojourn at the school, with the neighbouring farmers' sons, whom he assisted in their studies as a compensation for his support. He was called, during these peregrinations, the *Poor Scholar*—a character which secured him the esteem and hospitable attention of the peasantry, who never fail in respect to any one characterised by a zeal for learning and knowledge.

In this manner he proceeded, a literary knight-errant, filled with a chivalrous love of letters which would have done honour to the most learned peripatetic of them all; enlarging his own powers, and making fresh acquisitions of knowledge as he went along. His contests, his defeats, and his triumphs, of course, were frequent; and his habits of thinking and reasoning must have been considerably improved, his acquaintance with classical and mathematical authors rendered more intimate, and his powers of illustration and comparison more clear and happy. After three or four years spent in this manner, he usually returned to his native place, sent another challenge to the schoolmaster, in the capacity of a candidate for his situation, and, if successful, drove him out of the district and established himself in his situation. The vanquished master sought a new district, sent a new challenge in his turn to some other teacher, and usually put him to flight in the same manner. The terms of defeat or victory, according to their application, were called *sacking* and *bogging*.

"There was a great argument entirely, sir," said a peasant once when speaking of these contests; "'twas at the chapel on Sunday week, betune young Tom Brady, that was a poor scholar in Munsther, and Mr. Hartigan, the schoolmaster."

"And who was victorious?" I inquired.

"Why, sir, and maybe 'twas young Brady that didn't *sack* him clane, before the priest and all, and went nigh to *bog* the priest himself in Greek. His reverence was only two words beyant him; but he sacked the masther, anyhow, and showed him in the Grammatical and Dixonary where he was wrong."

"And what is Brady's object in life?" I asked. "What does he intend to do?"

"Intend to do, is it? I'm tould nothing less nor going into Thrinity College in Dublin, and expects to bate them all there,

out and out: he's first to make something they call a seizure;¹ and, after making that good, he's to be a counsellor. So, sir, you see what it is to resave good schoolin' and to have the larin'; but, indeed, it's Brady that's the great head-piece entirely."

Unquestionably many who received instruction in this manner have distinguished themselves in the Dublin University; and I have no hesitation in saying that young men educated in Irish hedge schools, as they were called, have proved themselves to be better classical scholars and mathematicians, generally speaking, than any proportionate number of those educated in our first-rate academies. The Munster masters have long been, and still are, particularly celebrated for making excellent classical and mathematical scholars.

That a great deal of ludicrous pedantry generally accompanied this knowledge is not at all surprising, when we consider the rank these worthy teachers held in life, and the stretch of inflation at which their pride was kept by the profound reverence excited by their learning among the people. It is equally true that each of them had a stock of *crambos* ready for accidental encounter which would have puzzled Euclid or Sir Isaac Newton himself; but even these trained their minds to habits of acuteness and investigation. When a schoolmaster of this class had established himself as a good mathematician, the predominant enjoyment of his heart and life was to write the epithet *Philomath* after his name; and this, whatever document he subscribed, was never omitted. If he witnessed a will, it was Timothy Fagan, Philomath; if he put his name to a promissory note, it was Tim. Fagan, Philomath; if he addressed a love-letter to his sweetheart, it was still Timothy Fagan—or whatever the name might be—Philomath; and this was always written in legible and distinct copyhand, sufficiently large to attract the observation of the reader.

It was also usual for a man who had been a pre-eminent and extraordinary scholar to have the epithet GREAT prefixed to his name. I remember one of this description, who was called the *Great O'Brien, par excellence*. In the latter years of his life he gave up teaching, and led a circulating life, going round from school to school, and remaining a week or a month alternately among his brethren. His visits were considered an honour, and raised considerably the literary character of those with whom he resided; for he spoke of dunces with the most

¹ Sizar.

dignified contempt, and the general impression was that he would scorn even to avail himself of their hospitality. Like most of his brethren, he could not live without the *poteen*; and his custom was to drink a pint of it in its native purity before he entered into any literary contest, or made any display of his learning at wakes or other Irish festivities; and most certainly, however blamable the practice, and injurious to health and morals, it threw out his talents and his powers in a most surprising manner.

It was highly amusing to observe the peculiarity which the consciousness of superior knowledge impressed upon the conversation and personal appearance of this decaying race. Whatever might have been the original conformation of their physical structure, it was sure, by the force of acquired habit, to transform itself into a stiff, erect, consequential, and unbending manner, ludicrously characteristic of an inflated sense of their extraordinary knowledge, and a proud and commiserating contempt of the dark ignorance by which, in despite of their own light, they were surrounded. Their conversation, like their own *crambos*, was dark and difficult to be understood; their words truly sesquipedalian; their voice loud and commanding in its tones; their deportment grave and dictatorial, but completely indescribable, and certainly original to the last degree, in those instances where the ready blundering but genuine humour of their country maintained an unyielding rivalry in their disposition against the natural solemnity which was considered necessary to keep up the due dignity of their character.

In many of these persons, where the original humour and gaiety of the disposition were known, all efforts at the grave and dignified were complete failures, and these were enjoyed by the peasantry and their own pupils nearly with the sensations which the enactment of Hamlet by Liston would necessarily produce. At all events their education, allowing for the usual exceptions, was by no means superficial; and the reader has already received a sketch of the trials which they had to undergo before they considered themselves qualified to enter upon the duties of their calling. Their life was, in fact, a state of literary warfare; and they felt that a mere elementary knowledge of their business would have been insufficient to carry them, with suitable credit, through the attacks to which they were exposed from travelling teachers, whose mode of establishing themselves in schools was, as I said, by driving away the less qualified and usurping their places. This, according to the law of opinion and the custom which prevailed, was very easily effected, for the peasantry

uniformly encouraged those whom they supposed to be the most competent; as to moral or religious instruction, neither was expected from them, so that the indifference of the moral character was no bar to their success.

The village of Findramore was situated at the foot of a long green hill, the outline of which formed a low arch as it rose to the eye against the horizon. This hill was studded with clumps of beeches, and sometimes enclosed as a meadow. In the month of July, when the grass on it was long, many an hour have I spent in solitary enjoyment, watching the wavy motion produced upon its pliant surface by the sunny winds, or the flight of the cloud shadows, like gigantic phantoms, as they swept rapidly over it, whilst the murmur of the rocking trees and the glancing of their bright leaves in the sun produced a heartfelt pleasure, the very memory of which rises in my imagination like some fading recollection of a brighter world.

At the foot of this hill ran a clear, deep-banked river, bounded on one side by a slip of rich, level meadow, and on the other by a kind of common for the village geese, whose white feathers, during the summer season, lay scattered over its green surface. It was also the playground for the boys of the village school; for there ran that part of the river which, with very correct judgment, the urchins had selected as their bathing-place. A little slope or watering-ground in the bank brought them to the edge of the stream, where the bottom fell away into the fearful depths of the whirlpool under the hanging oak on the other bank. Well do I remember the first time I ventured to swim across it, and even yet do I see, in imagination, the two bunches of water flaggons on which the inexperienced swimmers trusted themselves in the water.

About two hundred yards above this, the *boreen*¹ which led from the village to the main road crossed the river by one of those old narrow bridges whose arches rise like round ditches across the road—an almost impassable barrier to horse and car. On passing the bridge in a northern direction you found a range of low thatched houses on each side of the road; and if one o'clock, the hour of dinner, drew near, you might observe columns of blue smoke curling up from a row of chimneys, some made of wicker creels plastered over with a rich coat of mud;

¹ A little road.

some of old, narrow, bottomless tubs ; and others, with a greater appearance of taste, ornamented with thick circular ropes of straw, sewed together like bees' skeps with the peel of a brier ; and many having nothing but the open vent above. But the smoke by no means escaped by its legitimate aperture, for you might observe little clouds of it bursting out of the doors and windows ; the panes of the latter, being mostly stopped at other times with old hats and rags, were now left entirely open for the purpose of giving it a free escape.

Before the doors, on right and left, was a series of dung-hills, each with its concomitant sink of green, rotten water ; and if it happened that a stout-looking woman, with watery eyes and a yellow cap hung loosely upon her matted locks, came, with a chubby urchin on one arm and a pot of dirty water in her hand, its unceremonious ejection into the aforesaid sink would be apt to send you up the village with your finger and thumb (for what purpose you would yourself perfectly understand) closely, but not knowingly, applied to your nostrils. But, independently of this, you would be apt to have other reasons for giving your horse, whose heels are by this time surrounded by a dozen of barking curs, and the same number of shouting urchins, a pretty sharp touch of the spurs, as well as for complaining bitterly of the odour of the atmosphere. It is no landscape without figures ; and you might notice, if you are, as I suppose you to be, a man of observation, in every sink as you pass along, a "slip of a pig," stretched in the middle of the mud, the very *beau idéal* of luxury, giving occasionally a long, luxuriant grunt, highly expressive of his enjoyment ; or perhaps an old farrower, lying in indolent repose, with half-a-dozen young ones jostling each other for their draught, and punching her belly with their little snouts, reckless of the fumes they are creating ; whilst the loud crow of the cock, as he confidently flaps his wings on his own dung-hill, gives the warning note for the hour of dinner.

As you advance you will also perceive several faces thrust out of the doors, and rather than miss a sight of you, a grotesque visage peeping by a short cut through the paneless windows—or a tattered female flying to snatch up her urchin that has been tumbling itself, heels up, in the dust of the road, lest "the gentleman's horse might ride over it ;" and if you happen to look behind you may observe a shaggy-headed youth in tattered frieze, with one hand thrust indolently in his breast, standing at the door in conversation with the inmates, a broad grin of sarcastic ridicule on his face, in the act of breaking a joke or two upon yourself or your horse ; or perhaps your jaw

may be saluted with a lump of clay, just hard enough not to fall asunder as it flies, cast by some ragged gorsoon from behind a hedge, who squats himself in a ridge of corn to avoid detection.

Seated upon a hob at the door, you may observe a toilworn man, without coat or waistcoat; his red, muscular, sun-burnt shoulder peering through the remnant of a shirt, mending his shoes with a piece of twisted flax, called a *lingel*—or perhaps sewing two footless stockings (or *martyeens*) to his coat, as a substitute for sleeves.

In the gardens, which are usually fringed with nettles, you will see a solitary labourer, working with that carelessness and apathy that characterise an Irishman when he labours *for himself*—leaning upon his spade to look after you, and glad of any excuse to be idle.

The houses, however, are not all such as I have described—far from it. You see, here and there, between the more humble cabins, a stout, comfortable-looking farm-house, with ornamental thatching and well-glazed windows; adjoining to which is a haggard, with five or six large stacks of corn, well trimmed and roped, and a fine yellow, weather-beaten old hayrick, half cut—not taking into account twelve or thirteen circular strata of stones that mark out the foundation on which others had been raised. Neither is the rich smell of oaten or wheaten bread, which the good wife is baking on the griddle, unpleasant to your nostrils; nor would the bubbling of a large pot, in which you might see, should you chance to enter, a prodigious square of fat, yellow, and almost transparent bacon tumbling about, be an unpleasant object; truly, as it hangs over a large fire, with well-swept hearthstone, it is in good keeping with the white settle and chairs, and the dresser with noggins, wooden trenchers, and pewter dishes perfectly clean, and as well polished as a French courtier.

As you leave the village you have, to the left, a view of the hill which I have already described, and to the right a level expanse of fertile country, bounded by a good view of respectable mountains, peering decently into the sky; and in a line that forms an acute angle from the point of the road where you ride is a delightful valley, in the bottom of which shines a pretty lake; and a little beyond, on the slope of a green hill, rises a splendid house, surrounded by a park, well wooded and stocked with deer. You have now topped the little hill above the village, and a straight line of level road, a mile long, goes forward to a country town which lies immediately behind that

white church, with its spire cutting into the sky, before you. You descend on the other side, and, having advanced a few perches, look to the left, where you see a long thatched chapel, only distinguished from a dwelling-house by its want of chimneys, and a small stone cross that stands on the top of the eastern gable; behind it is a graveyard, and beside it a snug public-house, well whitewashed; then, to the right, you observe a door apparently in the side of a clay bank, which rises considerably above the pavement of the road. What! you ask yourself, can this be a human habitation?—but ere you have time to answer the question, a confused buzz of voices from within reaches your ear, and the appearance of a little “gorsoon,” with a red, close-cropped head and Milesian face, having in his hand a short white stick, or the thigh bone of a horse, which you at once recognise as “the pass” of a village school, gives you the full information. He has an ink-horn, covered with leather, dangling at the button-hole (for he has long since played away the buttons) of his frieze jacket—his mouth is circumscribed with a streak of ink—his pen is stuck knowingly behind his ear—his shins are dotted over with blisters, black, red, and blue—on each heel a kibe—his “leather crackers,” videlicet, breeches, shrunk up upon him, and only reaching as far down as the caps of his knees. Having spied you, he places his hand over his brows, to throw back the dazzling light of the sun, and peers at you from under it, till he breaks out into a laugh, exclaiming, half to himself, and half to you—

“You a gintleman!—no; nor one of your breed never was, you procthorin’ thief, you!”

You are now immediately opposite the door of the seminary, when half-a-dozen of those seated next it notice you.

“Oh, sir, here’s a gintleman on a horse!—masther, sir, here’s a gintleman on a horse, wid boots and spurs on him, that’s looking in at us.”

“Silence!” exclaims the master; “back from the door, boys, rehearse—every one of you rehearse, I say, you Bœotians, till the gintleman goes past!”

“I want to go out, if you plase, sir.”

“No, you don’t, Phelim.”

“I do, indeed, sir.”

“What! is it afther conthradictin’ me you’d be?—don’t you see the porter’s out, and you can’t go.”

“Well, ’tis Mat Meehan has it, sir, and he’s out this half-hour, sir. I can’t stay in, sir—iphfff—iphfff!”

"You want to be idling your time looking at the gentleman, Phelim."

"No, indeed, sir—iphfff!"

"Phelim, I know you of ould—go to your sate—I tell you, Phelim, you were born for the encouragement of the hemp manufacture, and you'll die promoting it."

In the meantime the master puts his head out of the door, his body stooped to a "half bend"—a phrase, and the exact curve which it forms, I leave for the present to your own sagacity—and surveys you until you pass. That is an Irish hedge school, and the personage who follows you with his eye a hedge school-master. His name is Matthew Kavanagh; and as you seem to consider his literary establishment rather a curiosity in its kind, I will, if you be disposed to hear it, give you the history of him and his establishment, beginning, in the first place, with—

THE ABDUCTION OF MAT KAVANAGH,

The Hedge Schoolmaster.

For about three years before the period of which I write, the village of Findramore and the parish in which it lay were without a teacher. Mat's predecessor was a James Garraghty, a lame young man, the son of a widow, whose husband lost his life in attempting to extinguish a fire that broke out in the dwelling-house of Squire Johnston, a neighbouring magistrate. The son was a boy at the time of this disaster, and the Squire, as some compensation for the loss of his father's life in his service, had him educated at his own expense; that is to say, he gave the master who taught in the village orders to educate him gratuitously, on the condition of being horsewhipped out of the parish if he refused. As soon as he considered himself qualified to teach, he opened a school in the village on his own account, where he taught until his death, which happened in less than a year after the commencement of his little seminary. The children usually assembled in his mother's cabin; but as she did not long survive the son, this, which was at best a very miserable residence, soon tottered to the ground. The roof and thatch were burned for firing, the mud gables fell in, and were overgrown with grass, nettles, and docks; and nothing remained but a foot or two of the little clay side-walls, which presented, when associated with the calamitous fate of their inoffensive inmates, rather a touching image of ruin upon a small scale.

Garraghty had been attentive to his little pupils, and his instructions were sufficient to give them a relish for education—a circumstance which did not escape the observation of their parents, who duly appreciated it. His death, however, deprived them of this advantage; and as schoolmasters, under the old system, were always at a premium, it so happened that for three years afterwards none of that class presented himself to their acceptance. Many a trial had been made, and many a sly offer held out, as a lure to the neighbouring teachers, but they did not take; for although the country was densely inhabited, yet it was remarked that no schoolmaster ever "*thruv*" in the neighbourhood of Findramore. The place, in fact, had got a bad name. Garraghty died, it was thought, of poverty—a disease to which the Findramore schoolmasters had been always known to be subject. His predecessor, too, was hanged, along with two others, for burning the house of an "Aagint."

Then the Findramore boys were not easily dealt with, having an ugly habit of involving their unlucky teachers in those quarrels which they kept up with the Ballyscanlan boys—a fighting clan that lived at the foot of the mountains above them. These two factions, when they met, whether at fair or market, wake or wedding, could never part without carrying home on each side a dozen or two of bloody cockscombs. For these reasons the parish of Aughindrum had for a few years been afflicted with an extraordinary dearth of knowledge; the only literary establishment which flourished in it being a parochial institution, which, however excellent in design, yet, like too many establishments of the same nature, degenerated into a source of knowledge, morals, and education exceedingly dry and unproductive to every person except the master, who was enabled by his honest industry to make a provision for his family absolutely surprising, when we consider the moderate nature of his ostensible income. It was, in fact, like a well dried up, to which scarcely any one ever thinks of going for water.

Such a state of things, however, could not last long. The youth of Findramore were parched for want of the dew of knowledge; and their parents and grown brethren met one Saturday evening in Barny Brady's shebeen-house to take into consideration the best means for procuring a resident schoolmaster for the village and neighbourhood. It was a difficult point, and required great dexterity of management to enable them to devise any effectual remedy for the evil which they felt.

There were present at this council, Tim Dolan, the senior of the village, and his three sons, Jem Coogan, Brian Murphy, Paddy Delany, Owen Roe O'Neil, Jack Traynor, and Andy Connell, with five or six others, whom it is not necessary to enumerate.

"Bring us in a quart, Barney," said Dolan to Brady, who on this occasion we must designate as the host, "and let it be rale hathen."

"What do you mane, Tim?" replied the host.

"I mane," continued Dolan, "stuff that was never christened, man alive."

"Thin I'll bring you the same that Father Maguire got last night on his way home, afther anointin' ould Katty Duffy," replied Brady. "I'm sure, whatever I might be afther givin' to strangers, Tim, I'd be long sorry to give *yees* anything but the right sort."

"That's a gay man, Barney," said Traynor; "but off wid you like shot, an' let us get it under our tooth first, an' then we'll tell you more about it.—A big rogue is the same Barney," he added, after Brady had gone to bring in the poteen, "an' never sells a drop that's not one whisky and five wathers."

"But he couldn't expose it on *you*, Jack," observed Connell; "you're too ould a hand about the *pot* for that. Warn't you in the mountains last week?"

"Ay; but the curse of Cromwell upon the thief of a gauger, Simpson—himself and a pack o' redcoats surrounded us when we war beginnin' to *double*, and the purtiest *runnin'* that ever you seen was lost; for, you see, before you could cross yourself, we had the bottoms knocked clane out of the vessels; so that the villains didn't get a hole in our coats, as they thought they would."

"I tell you," observed O'Neil, "there's a *bad pill* somewhere about us."

"Ay is there, Owen," replied Traynor; "and what is more, I don't think he's a hundhred miles sittin' in."

"Faith, maybe so, Jack," returned the other.

"I'd never give in to that," said Murphy. "'Tis Barney Brady that would never turn informer—the same thing isn't in him, nor in any of his breed; there's not a man in the parish I'd thrust sooner."

"I'd jist thrust him," replied Traynor, "as far as I could throw a cow by the tail. Arrah, what's the rason that the gauger never looks next or near *his* place, an' it's well known

that he sells poteen widout a licence, though he goes past his door wanst a week?"

"What the h—— is keepin' him at all?" inquired one of Dolan's sons.

"Look at him," said Traynor, "comin' in out of the garden; now much afeared he is! keepin' the whisky in a phatie ridge—an' I'd kiss the book that he brought that bottle out in his pocket, instead of diggin' it up out o' the garden."

Whatever Brady's usual habits of *christening* his poteen might have been, that which he now placed before them was good. He laid the bottle on a little deal table with cross legs, and along with it a small drinking glass fixed in a bit of flat circular wood, as a substitute for the original bottom, which had been broken. They now entered upon the point in question without further delay.

"Come, Tim," said Coogan, "you're the oldest man, and must spake first."

"Throth, man," replied Dolan, "beggin' your pardon, I'll dhrink first—*shud-urth*, your sowl; success, boys—glory to ourselves, and confusion to the Scanlan boys, any way."

"And maybe," observed Connell, "'tis we that didn't lick them well in the last fair—they're not able to meet the Findramore birds even on their own walk."

"Well, boys," said Delany, "about the masther? Our childhre will grow up like *bullockeens*, widout knowing a hap'orth; and larning, you see, is a burdyen that's asy carried."

"Ay," observed O'Neil, "as Solvester Maguire, the poet, used to say—

" ' Labour for larnin' before you grow ould,
For larning is better nor riches nor gould;
Riches an' gould they may vanquish away,
But larnin' alone it will never decay.' "

"Success, Owen! Why, you might put down the pot and warm an air to it," said Murphy.

"Well, boys, are we all safe?" asked Traynor.

"Safe!" said old Dolan. "Arrah, what are you talkin' about? Sure, 'tisn't of that same spalpeen of a gauger that we'd be afraid?"

During this observation, young Dolan pressed Traynor's foot under the table, and they both went out for about five minutes.

"Father," said the son, when he and Traynor re-entered the room, "you're a-wanting home."

"Who wants me, Larry, avick?" says the father.

The son immediately whispered him for a moment, when the old man instantly rose, got his hat, and, after drinking another bumper of the poteen, departed.

"'Twas hardly worth while," said Delany; "the ould fellow's mettle to the backbone, an' would never show the *garran-bane* at any rate, even if he knew all about it."

"Bad end to the syllable I'd let the same ould cock hear," said the son; "the devil thrust any man that didn't *switch the primer*¹ for it, though he *is* my father; but now, boys, that the coast's clear and all safe—where will we get a schoolmaster? Mat Kavanagh won't budge from the Scanlan boys, even if we war to put our hands undher his feet; and small blame to him, when he heads them—sure, you would not expect him to be a chraitor to his own?"

"Faith, the gorsoons is in a bad state," said Murphy; "but, boys, where will we get a man that's *up*? Why, I know 'tis better to have anybody nor be widout one; but we might kill two birds wid one stone—if we could get a masher that would carry 'Articles,'² an' swear in the boys, from time to time—an', between ourselves, if there's any danger of the hemp, we may as well lay it upon strange shoulders."

"Ay, but since Corrigan swung for the Aagint," replied Delany, "they're a little modest in havin' act or part wid us; but the best plan is to get an advartisement wrote out, an' have it posted on the chapel door."

This hint was debated with much earnestness; but as they were really anxious to have a master—in the first place, for the simple purpose of educating their children; and in the next, for filling the situation of director and regulator of their illegal Ribbon meetings—they determined on penning an advertisement, according to the suggestion of Delany. After drinking another bottle, and amusing themselves with some further chat, one of the Dolans undertook to draw up the advertisement, which ran as follows:—

"ADVARTAAISMENT.

"Notes to Schoolmasters, and to all others whom it may consarn.

"WANTED,

"For the nabourhood and vircinity of the Townland of

¹ Take an oath.

² A copy of the Whiteboy oath and regulations.

Findramore, in the Parish of Aughindrum, in the Barony of Lisnamoghry, County of Sligo, Province of Connaught, Ireland.

“TO SCHOOLMASTERS.

“Take Notes—That any Schoolmaster who understands Spellin’ gramatically—Readin’ and Writin’, in the raal way, according to the Dixonary—Arithmatick—that is to say, the five common rules, namely, simple addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division—and addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of Dives’s denominations. Also reduction up and down—cross multiplication of coin—the Rule of Three direct—the Rule of Three in verse—the double Rule of Three—Frackshins taught according to the vulgar and decimatin’ method; and must be well practised to tache the Findramore boys how to manage the *Scuffle*.

“N.B.—He must be well grounded in *that*. Practis, Discount, and *Rebatin’*. N.B.—Must be well grounded in *that* also.

“Tret and Tare—Fellowship—Allegation—Barther—Rates per Scent—Intherest—Exchange—Prophet in Loss—the Square Root—the Kibe Root—Hippothenuse—Arithmetical and Gometrical Purgation—Compound Intherest—Loggerheadism—Questions for Exercise, and the Conendix to Algibbra. He must also know Jommithry accordin’ to Grunther’s scale—the Castigation of the Klipsticks—Surveying, and the use of the Jacob-staff.

“N.B.—Would get a good dale of Surveyin’ to do in the vircinity of Findramore, particularly in *Con-acre time*. If he knew the use of the globe, it would be an accusation. He must also understand the Three Sets of Book-keeping, by single and double entry, particularly Loftus and Company of Paris, their Account of Cash and Company. And, above all things, he must know how to tache the *Sarvin’ of Mass in Latin*, and be able to read Doctor Gallaher’s Irish Sarmints, and explain Kolumkill’s and Pastorini’s Prophecies.

“N.B.—If he understands *Cudgel-fencin’*, it would be an accusation also—but mustn’t tache us wid a staff that bends in the middle, bekase it breaks one’s head across the guard. Any schoolmaster capacious and collified to instruct in the above-mintioned branches would get a good school in the townland of Findramore and its vircinity, be well fed, an’ get the hoith o’ good livin’ among the farmers, an’ would be ped—

“For Book-keepin’, the three sets, *a ginny and a half*.

“For Gommethry, etc., *half-a-ginny a quarther*.

“Arithmetic, *aight and three-hapuns*.

“Readin’, Writin’, etc., *six Hogs*.

"Given under our hands, this 32nd of June, 18004.

"LARRY DOLAN.

"DICK DOLAN, his × mark.

"JEM COOGAN, his × mark.

"BRINE MURPHEY.

"PADDY DELANY, his × mark.

"JACK TRAYNOR.

"ANDY CONNELL.

"OWEN ROE O'NEIL, his × mark.

"N.B.—*By making airy application to any of the undher-mentioned he will hear of further particklers;* and if they find that he will shoot them, he may expect the best o' thratement, an' be well fed among the farmers.

"N.B.—Would get also a good night-school among the vircinity."

Having penned the above advertisement, it was carefully posted early the next morning on the chapel doors, with an expectation on the part of the patrons that it would not be wholly fruitless. The next week, however, passed without an application—the second also—and the third produced the same result; nor was there the slightest prospect of a schoolmaster being blown by any wind to the lovers of learning at Findramore. In the meantime the Ballyscanlan boys took care to keep up the ill-natured prejudice which had been circulated concerning the fatality that uniformly attended such schoolmasters as settled there; and when this came to the ears of the Findramore folk, it was once more resolved that the advertisement should be again put up, with a clause containing an explanation on that point. The clause ran as follows:—

"N.B.—The two last masters that was hanged out of Findramore—that is, Mickey Corrigan, who was hanged for killing the Aagint, and Jem Garraghty, that died of a declension—Jem died in quensequence of ill health, and Mickey was hanged contrary to his own wishes; so that it wasn't either of their faults. As witness our hands, this 27th of July.

"DICK DOLAN, his × mark."

This explanation, however, was as fruitless as the original advertisement; and week after week passed over without an offer from a single candidate. The "vircinity" of Findramore and its "nabourhood" seemed devoted to ignorance; and nothing remained except another effort at procuring a master by some more ingenious contrivance.

Debate after debate was consequently held in Barny Brady's; and, until a fresh suggestion was made by Delany, the prospect seemed as bad as ever. Delany at length fell upon a new plan; and it must be confessed that it was marked in a peculiar manner by a spirit of originality and enterprise—it being nothing less than a proposal to carry off, by force or stratagem, Mat Kavanagh, who was at that time fixed in the throne of literature among the Ballyscanlan boys, quite unconscious of the honourable translation to the neighbourhood of Findramore which was intended for him. The project, when broached, was certainly a startling one, and drove most of them to a pause before they were sufficiently collected to give an opinion on its merits.

"Nothin', boys, is asier," said Delany. "There's to be a pattrern in Ballymagowan on next Sathurday—an' that's jist half way betune ourselves and the Scanlan boys. Let us musther an' go there, anyhow. We can keep an eye on Mat widout much trouble, an', when opportunity sarves, nick him at wanst, an' off wid him clane."

"But," said Traynor, "what would we do wid him when he'd be here? Wouldn't he *cut an' run* the first opportunity?"

"How can he, ye omadhawn, if we put a manwill in our pocket, an' sware him? But we'll butther him up when he's among us; or, be me sowks, if it goes to that, force him either to settle wid ourselves, or make himself scarce in the counthry entirely."

"Divil a much force it'll take to keep him, I'm thinkin'," observed Murphy. "He'll have three times a betther school here; and if he was wanst settled, I'll engage he would take to it kindly."

"See here, boys," says Dick Dolan, in a whisper, "if that bloody villain, Brady, isn't afther standin' this quarter of an hour, strivin' to hear what we're about; but it's well we didn't bring up anything consarnin' the other business. Didn't I tell yees the desate was in 'im? Look at his shadow on the wall forninst us."

"Hould yer tongues, boys," said Traynor; "jist keep never mindin', and, be my sowks, I'll make him sup sorrow for that thrick."

"You had betther neither make nor meddle with him," observed Delany; "jist put him out o' that—but don't raise yer hand to him, or he'll sarve you as he did Jim Flanagan—put ye three or four months in the *Stone Jug*."

Traynor, however, had gone out while he was speaking, and

in a few minutes dragged in Brady, whom he caught in the very act of eavesdropping.

"Jist come in, Brady," said Traynor, as he dragged him along—"walk in, man alive; sure, and sich an honest man as you are needn't be afeard of lookin' his friend in the face!—ho!—an' by sowl, is it a spy we've got? an', I suppose, would be an informer too, if he had heard anything to tell!"

"What's the manin' of this, boys?" exclaimed the others, feigning ignorance—"let the honest man go, Traynor. What do ye hawl him that-a-way for, ye gallis pet?"

"Honest!" replied Traynor—"how very honest he is, the desavin' villain—to be standin' at the windy there, wantin' to overhear the little harmless talk we had."

"Come, Traynor," said Brady, seizing him in his turn by the neck, "take your hands off of me, or, bad fate to me, but I'll lave ye a mark."

Traynor, in his turn, had his hand twisted in Brady's cravat, which he drew tightly about his neck, until the other got nearly black in the face.

"Let me go, you villain!" exclaimed Brady, "or by this blessed night that's in it, it'll be worse for you."

"Villain! is it?" replied Traynor, making a blow at him, whilst Brady snatched at a penknife which one of the others had placed on the table, after picking the tobacco out of his pipe—intending either to stab Traynor or to cut the knot of the cravat by which he was held. The others, however, interfered, and prevented further mischief.

"Brady," said Traynor, "you'll rue this night, if ever a man did, you treacherous, informin' villain. What an honest spy we have among us!—and a short coorse to you!"

"Oh, hould yer tongue, Traynor!" replied Brady; "I b'lieve it's best known who is both the spy and the informer. The divil a pint of poteen ever you'll run in this parish until you clear yourself of bringing the gauger on the Traceys, bekase they tuck Mick M'Kew in preference to yourself to run it for them."

Traynor made another attempt to strike him, but was prevented. The rest now interfered; and, in the course of an hour or so, an adjustment took place.

Brady took up the tongs, and swore "by that blessed iron" that he neither heard nor intended to hear anything they said, and this exculpation was followed by a fresh bottle at his own expense.

"You omadhawn," said he to Traynor, "I was on'y puttin'

up a dozen o' bottles into the tatch of the house, when you thought I was listenin' ; " and, as a proof of the truth of this, he brought them out and showed them some bottles of poteen, neatly covered up under the thatch.

Before their separation they finally planned the abduction of Kavanagh from the Patron, on the Saturday following, and, after drinking another round, went home to their respective dwellings.

In this speculation, however, they experienced a fresh disappointment ; for, ere Saturday arrived, whether in consequence of secret intimation of their intention from Brady or some other friend, or in compliance with the offer of a better situation, the fact was that Mat Kavanagh had removed to another school, distant about eighteen miles from Findramore. But they were not to be outdone. A new plan was laid, and in the course of the next week a dozen of the most enterprising and intrepid of the " boys," mounted each upon a good horse, went to Mat's new residence for the express purpose of securing him.

Perhaps our readers may scarcely believe that a love of learning was so strong among the inhabitants of Findramore as to occasion their taking such remarkable steps for establishing a schoolmaster among them ; but the country was densely inhabited, the rising population exceedingly numerous, and the outcry for a schoolmaster amongst the parents of the children loud and importunate. Besides this, the illegal principles of Whiteboyism were as deeply rooted in that neighbourhood as in others ; and the young men stood in need of some person who might regulate their proceedings, keep their registries, preside at and appoint their meetings, and organise with sufficient skill and precision, not only the vast numbers who had been already enrolled as members, but who were putting forward their claims day after day to be admitted as such.

God knows it is no wonder that Ireland should be as she is, and as she long has been, when we consider the fact that those who conducted the education of her peasantry were the most active instruments in disseminating among the rising generation such pernicious principles as those which characterise this system, so deeply rooted among the people—men whose moral characters were, with few exceptions, execrable—and nine-tenths of whom held situations of authority in these diabolical associations.

The fact, therefore, was that a double motive stimulated the inhabitants of Findramore in their efforts to procure a master. The old and middle-aged heads of families were actuated by a

simple wish, inseparable from Irishmen, to have their children educated ; and the young men, not only by a determination to have a properly qualified person to preside at their nightly orgies, but an inclination to improve themselves in reading, writing, and arithmetic. The circumstance I am now relating is one which actually took place ; and any man acquainted with the remote parts of Ireland may have often seen bloody and obstinate quarrels among the peasantry in vindicating a priority of claim to the local residence of a schoolmaster among them. I could, within my own experience, relate two or three instances of this nature.

It was one Saturday night in the latter end of the month of May that a dozen Findramore "boys," as they were called, set out upon this most singular of all literary speculations, resolved, at whatever risk, to secure the person and effect the permanent bodily presence among them of the redoubtable Mat Kavanagh. Each man was mounted on a horse, and one of them brought a spare steed for the accommodation of the schoolmaster. The caparison of this horse was somewhat remarkable. It consisted of a wooden straddle, such as is used by the peasantry for carrying wicker paniers or creels, which are hung upon two wooden pins that stand up out of its sides. Under it was a straw mat, to prevent the horse's back from being stripped by the straddle. On one side of this hung a large creel, and on the other a strong sack, tied round a stone of sufficient weight to balance the empty creel. The night was warm and clear, the moon and stars all threw their mellow light from a serene, unclouded sky, and the repose of nature in the short nights of this delightful season resembles that of a young virgin of sixteen—still, light, and glowing. Their way, for the most part of their journey, lay through a solitary mountain-road ; and, as they did not undertake the enterprise without a good stock of poteen, their light-hearted songs and choruses awoke the echoes that slept in the mountain glens as they went along. The adventure, it is true, had as much of frolic as of seriousness in it ; and merely as the means of a day's fun for the boys, it was the more eagerly entered into.

It was about midnight when they left home, and as they did not wish to arrive at the village to which they were bound until the morning should be rather advanced, the journey was as slowly performed as possible. Every remarkable object on the way was noticed, and its history, if any particular association was connected with it, minutely detailed, whenever it happened to be known. When the sun rose, many beautiful green spots

and hawthorn valleys excited, even from these unpolished and illiterate peasants, warm bursts of admiration at their fragrance and beauty. In some places the dark flowery heath clothed the mountains to the tops, from which the grey mists, lit by a flood of light, and breaking into masses before the morning breeze, began to descend into the valleys beneath them; whilst the voice of the grouse, the bleating of sheep and lambs, the peewee of the wheeling lapwing, and the song of the lark, threw life and animation over the previous stillness of the country. Sometimes a shallow river would cross the road, winding off into a valley that was overhung on one side by rugged precipices clothed with luxuriant heath and wild ash, whilst on the other it was skirted by a long sweep of greensward, skimmed by the twittering swallow, over which lay scattered numbers of sheep, cows, brood mares, and colts—many of them rising and stretching themselves ere they resumed their pasture, leaving the spots on which they lay of a deeper green. Occasionally, too, a sly-looking fox might be seen lurking about a solitary lamb, or brushing over the hills with a fat goose upon his back, retreating to his den among the inaccessible rocks, after having plundered some unsuspecting farmer.

As they advanced into the skirts of the cultivated country they met many other beautiful spots of scenery among the upland, considerable portions of which, particularly in long sloping valleys that faced the morning sun, were covered with hazel and brushwood; where the unceasing and simple notes of the cuckoo were incessantly plied, mingled with the more mellow and varied notes of the thrush and blackbird. Sometimes the bright summer waterfall seemed, in the rays of the sun, like a column of light, and the springs that issued from the sides of the more distant and lofty mountains shone with a steady, dazzling brightness, on which the eye could scarcely rest. The morning, indeed, was beautiful, the fields in bloom, and everything cheerful. As the sun rose in the heavens, nature began gradually to awaken into life and happiness; nor was the natural grandeur of a Sabbath summer morning among these piles of magnificent mountains, nor its heartfelt but more artificial beauty in the cultivated country, lost even upon the unphilosophical “boys” of Findramore, so true is it that the appearance of nature will force enjoyment upon the most uncultivated heart.

When they had arrived within two miles of the little town in which Mat Kavanagh was fixed, they turned off into a deep glen, a little to the left; and, after having seated themselves

under a white-thorn which grew on the banks of a rivulet, they began to devise the best immediate measures to be taken.

"Boys," said Tim Dolan, "how will we manage now with this thief of a schoolmaster, at all? Come, Jack Traynor, you that's up to still-house work—escapin' and carryin' away stills from gaugers, the bloody villains!—out wid yer *spake*, till we hear your opinion."

"Do ye think, boys," said Andy Connell, "that we could flatther him to come by fair mains?"

"Flatther him!" said Traynor; "and, by my sowl, if we flatther him at all, it must be by the hair of the head. No, no; let us bring him first whether he will or not, an' ax his consint afterwards."

"I'll tell you what it is, boys," continued Connell: "I'll hould a wager, if you lave him to me, I'll bring him wid his own consint."

"No, nor sorra that you'll do, nor could do," replied Traynor; "for, along wid everything else, he thinks he's not jist doated on by the Findramore people, being one of the Ballyscanlan tribe. No, no; let two of us go to his place, and purtind that we have other business in the fair of Clansallagh on Monday next, and ax him in to dhrink, for he'll not refuse that, anyhow; then, when he's half tipsy, ax him to convoy us this far; we'll then meet you here, an' tell him some palaver or other—sit down again where we are now, and, after making him dead dhrunk, hoist a big stone in the creel, and Mat in the sack on the other side, wid his head out, and off wid him; and he will know neither act nor part about it till we're at Findramore."

Having approved of this project, they pulled out each a substantial complement of stout oaten bread, which served, along with the whisky, for breakfast. The two persons pitched on for decoying Mat were Dolan and Traynor, who accordingly set out, full of glee at the singularity and drollness of their undertaking. It is unnecessary to detail the ingenuity with which they went about it—because, in consequence of Kavanagh's love of drink, very little ingenuity was necessary. One circumstance, however, came to light, which gave them much encouragement, and that was a discovery that Mat by no means relished his situation.

In the meantime, those who stayed behind in the glen felt their patience begin to flag a little, because of the delay made by the others, who had promised, if possible, to have the schoolmaster in the glen before two o'clock. But the fact was that Mat, who was far less deficient in hospitality than in

learning, brought them into his house, and not only treated them to plenty of whisky, but made the wife prepare a dinner, for which he detained them, swearing that, except they stopped to partake of it, he would not convoy them to the place appointed. Evening was, therefore, tolerably far advanced when they made their appearance at the glen, in a very equivocal state of sobriety—Mat being by far the steadiest of the three, but still considerably the worse for what he had taken. He was now welcomed by a general huzza; and on his expressing his surprise at the appearances, they pointed to their horses, telling him that they were bound for the fair of Clansallagh, for the purpose of selling them. This was the more probable as, when a fair occurs in Ireland, it is usual for cattle-dealers, particularly horse-jockeys, to effect sales and “show” their horses on the evening before.

Mat now sat down, and was vigorously plied with strong poteen—songs were sung, stories told, and every device resorted to that was calculated to draw out and heighten his sense of enjoyment; nor were their efforts without success, for, in the course of a short time, Mat was free from all earthly care, being incapable of either speaking or standing.

“Now, boys,” said Dolan, “let us do the thing clane an’ dacent. Let you, Jim Coogan, Brian Murphy, Paddy Delany, and Andy Connell, go back, and tell the wife and two childhre a cock-and-a-bull story about Mat—say that he is coming to Findramore for good and all, and that’ll be thruth, you know; and that he ordhered yees to bring her and them afther him; and we can come back for the furniture to-morrow.”

A word was enough—they immediately set off; and the others, not wishing that Mat’s wife should witness the mode of his conveyance, proceeded home, for it was now dusk. The plan succeeded admirably; and in a short time the wife and children, mounted behind the “boys” on the horses, were on the way after them to Findramore.

The reader is already aware of the plan they had adopted for translating Mat; but, as it was extremely original, I will explain it somewhat more fully. The moment the schoolmaster was intoxicated to the necessary point—that is to say, totally helpless and insensible—they opened the sack and put him in, heels foremost, tying it in such a way about his neck as might prevent his head from getting into it, thus avoiding the danger of suffocation. The sack, with Mat at full length in it, was then fixed to the pin of the straddle, so that he was in an erect posture during the whole journey. A creel was then hung at

the other side, in which was placed a large stone, of sufficient weight to preserve an equilibrium; and, to prevent any accident, a droll fellow sat astride behind the straddle, amusing himself and the rest by breaking jokes upon the novelty of Mat's situation.

"Well, Mat, *ma bouchal*, how duv ye like your sitivation? I b'lieve, for all your larnin', the Findramore boys have *sacked* you at last?"

"Ay," exclaimed another, "he *is* sacked at last, in spite of his Matthew-maticks."

"An', be my sowks," observed Traynor, "he'd be a long time goin' up a Maypowl in the state he's in—his own snail would bate him."¹

"Yes," said another, "but he desarves credit for travellin' from Clansallagh to Findramore, widout layin' a foot to the ground—

" 'Wan day wid Captain Whisky I wrastled a fall,
But faith I was no match for the captain at all—
But faith I was no match for the captain at all,
Though the landlady's measures they were damnable small.
Tooral, looral, looral, looral, lido.'

Whoo—hurroo! my darlin's—success to the Findramore boys!
Hurroo—hurroo—the Findramore boys for ever!"

"Boys, did ever yees hear the song Mat made on Ned Mullen's fight wid Jimmy Connor's gander? Well, here it is to the tune of 'Brian O'Lynn'—

" 'As Ned and the gander wor basting each other,
I hard a loud cry from the grey goose his mother;
I ran to assist him, wid my great speed,
Bud before I arrived the poor gander did bleed.
'Alas!' says the gander, 'I'm very ill-trated,
For tracherous Mullen has me fairly defated;
Bud had you been here for to show me fair play,
I could leather his *puckan*² around the lee bray.'

"Bravo! Mat," addressing the insensible schoolmaster—"success, poet. Hurroo for the Findramore boys! the Bridge boys for ever!"

¹ This alludes to a question in Gough's Arithmetic, which is considered difficult by hedge schoolmasters.

² Paunch.

They then commenced, in a tone of mock gravity, to lecture him upon his future duties—detailing the advantages of his situation, and the comforts he would enjoy among them—although they might as well have addressed themselves to the stone on the other side. In this manner they got along, amusing themselves at Mat's expense, and highly elated at the success of their undertaking. About two o'clock in the morning they reached the top of the little hill above the village, when, on looking back along the level stretch of road which I have already described, they noticed their companions, with Mat's wife and children, moving briskly after them. A general huzza now took place, which in a few minutes was answered by two or three dozen of the young folks, who were assembled in Barny Brady's waiting for their arrival. The scene now became quite animated—cheer after cheer succeeded—jokes, laughter, and rustic wit, pointed by the spirit of Brady's poteen, flew briskly about. When Mat was unsacked, several of them came up, and, shaking him cordially by the hand, welcomed him among them. To the kindness of this reception, however, Mat was wholly insensible, having been for the greater part of the journey in a profound sleep. The boys next slipped the loop of the sack off the straddle-pin; and carrying Mat into a farmer's house, they deposited him on a settle-bed, where he slept, unconscious of the journey he had performed, until breakfast-time on the next morning. In the meantime, the wife and children were taken care of by Mrs. Connell, who provided them with a bed and every other comfort which they could require. The next morning, when Mat awoke, his first call was for a drink. I should have here observed that Mrs. Kavanagh had been sent for by the good woman in whose house Mat had slept, that they might all breakfast and have a drop together, for they had already succeeded in reconciling *her* to the change.

"Wather!" said Mat—"a drink of wather, if it's to be had for love or money, or I'll split wid druth—I'm all in a state of conflagration; and my head—by the sowl of Newton, the inventor of fluxions, but my head is a complete illucidation of the centrifugle motion, so it is. Tundher-an-turf! is there no wather to be had? Nancy, I say, for God's sake, quicken yourself wid the hydraulics, or the best mathematician in Ireland's gone to the abode of Euclid and Pythagoras, that first invented the multiplication table."

On cooling his burning blood with the "hydraulics," he again lay down, with the intention of composing himself for another

sleep ; but his eye having noticed the novelty of his situation, he once more called Nancy.

"Nancy, avourneen," he inquired, "will you be afther resolving me one single proposition—Where am I at the present spaking? Is it in the *Siminary* at home, Nancy?"

Nancy in the meantime had been desired to answer in the affirmative, hoping that if his mind was made easy on that point, he might refresh himself by another hour or two's sleep, as he appeared to be not at all free from the effects of his previous intoxication.

"Why, Mat, jewel, where else would you be, alannah, but at home? Sure, isn't here Jack, an' Biddy, an' myself, Mat, agra, along wid me. Your head isn't well, but all you want is a good rousin' sleep."

"Very well, Nancy—very well ; that's enough—quite satisfactory—*quod erat demonstrandum*. May all kinds of bad luck rest upon the Findramore boys, anyway! The unlucky vagabonds—I'm the *third* they've done up. Nancy, off wid ye, like quicksilver, for the priest."

"The priest! Why, Mat, jewel, what puts that in your head? Sure, there's nothing wrong wid ye, only the sup o' drink you tuck yestherday."

"Go, woman," said Mat ; "did you ever know me to make a *calculation*? I tell you I'm *non compos mentis* from head to heel. Head! by my sowl, Nancy, it'll soon be a *caput mortuum* wid me—I'm far gone in a disease they call an ophtical delusion—the divil a thing less it is—me bein' in my own place, an' to think I'm lyin' in a settle-bed ; that there is a large dresser, covered wid pewter dishes and plates ; and, to crown all, the door on the wrong side of the house. Off wid ye, and tell his reverence that I want to be anointed, and to die in pace and charity wid all men. May the most especial kind of bad luck light down upon you, Findramore, and all that's in you, both man and baste—you have given *me* my gruel along wid the rest ; but, thank God, you won't hang me, anyhow! Off, Nancy, for the priest, till I die like a Christhan, in pace and forgiveness wid the world ;—all kinds of hard fortune to them! Make haste, woman, if you expect me to die like a Christhan! If they had let me alone till I'd publish to the world my Treatise upon Conic Sections—but to be cut off on my march to fame. Another draught of the hydraulics, Nancy, an' then for the priest ; but see, bring Father Connell, the curate, for he understands something about Matthew-maticks ; an' never heed Father Roger, for little he knows about them, not even

the difference between a right line—in the page of history, to his everlasting disgrace be it recorded !”

“Mat,” replied Nancy, scarcely preserving her gravity, “keep yourself from talkin’, an’ fall asleep ; then you’ll be well enough.”

“Is there e’er a sup at all in the house ?” said Mat ; “if there is, let me get it ; for there’s an ould proverb, though it’s a most unmathematical axiom as ever was invinted—‘Try a hair of the same dog that bit you.’ Give me a glass, Nancy, anyhow, an’ you can go for Father Connell after. Oh, by the sowl of Isaac, that invinted fluxions, what’s this for ?”

A general burst of laughter followed this demand and ejaculation ; and Mat sat up once more in the settle and examined the place with keener scrutiny. Nancy herself laughed heartily ; and, as she handed him the full glass, entered into an explanation of the circumstances attending his translation.

Mat, at all times rather of a pliant disposition, felt rejoiced on finding that he was still *compos mentis* ; and on hearing what took place he could not help entering into the humour of the enterprise, at which he laughed as heartily as any of them.

“Mat,” said the farmer and half-a-dozen of the neighbours, “you’re a happy man ; there’s a hundred of the boys have a school-house half built for you this same blessed sunshiny mornin’, while you’re lying at ase in your bed.”

“By the sowl of Newton, that invinted fluxions !” replied Mat, “but I’ll take revenge for the disgrace you put upon my profession, by stringing up a schoolmaster among you, and I’ll hang you all ! It’s death to stale a four-footed animal ; but what do you deserve for stalin’ a Christhan baste—a two-legged schoolmaster without feathers—eighteen miles, and he not to know it ?”

In the course of a short time Mat was dressed, and having found benefit from the “hair of the dog that bit him,” he tried another glass, which strung his nerves, or, as he himself expressed it—“they’ve got the raal mathematical tinsion again.” What the farmer said, however, about the school-house had been true. Early that morning all the growing and grown young men of Findramore and its “vircinity” had assembled, selected a suitable spot, and, with merry hearts, were then busily engaged in erecting a school-house for their general accommodation.

The manner of building hedge school-houses being rather

curious, I will describe it. The usual spot selected for their erection is a ditch on the roadside, in some situation where there will be as little damp as possible. From such a spot an excavation is made equal to the size of the building, so that, when this is scooped out, the back side-wall and the two gables are already formed, the banks being dug perpendicularly. The front side-wall, with a window in each side of the door, is then built of clay or green sods laid along in rows; the gables are also topped with sods, and perhaps a row or two laid upon the back side-wall, if it should be considered too low. Having got the erection of Mat's house thus far, they procured a scraw-spade, and repaired with a couple of dozen of cars to the next bog, from which they cut the light heathy surface in strips the length of the roof. A scraw-spade is an instrument resembling the letter T, with an iron plate at the lower end, considerably bent, and well adapted to the purpose for which it is intended. Whilst one party cut the scraws, another bound the *couples* and *bauks*, and a third cut as many green branches as were sufficient to wattle it. The couples, being bound, were raised—the ribs laid on—then the wattles, and afterwards the scraws.

Whilst these successive processes went forward, many others had been engaged all the morning cutting rushes; and the scraws were no sooner laid on than half-a-dozen thatchers mounted the roof, and long before the evening was closed a school-house, capable of holding near a hundred children, was finished. But among the peasantry no new house is ever put up without a hearth-warming and a dance. Accordingly, the clay floor was paired—a fiddler procured—Barney Brady and his stock of poteen sent for; the young women of the village and surrounding neighbourhood attended in their best finery; dancing commenced—and it was four o'clock the next morning when the merrymakers departed, leaving Mat a new home and a hard floor, ready for the reception of his scholars.

Business now commenced. At nine o'clock the next day Mat's furniture was settled in a small cabin, given to him at a cheap rate by one of the neighbouring farmers; for, whilst the school-house was being built, two men, with horses and cars, had gone to Clansallagh, accompanied by Nancy, and removed the furniture, such as it was, to their new residence. Nor was Mat, upon the whole, displeased at what had happened. He was now fixed in a flourishing country—fertile and well cultivated; nay, the bright landscape which his school-house commanded was sufficient in itself to reconcile him to his situation. The

inhabitants were in comparatively good circumstances ; many of them wealthy, respectable farmers, and capable of remunerating him very decently for his literary labours ; and what was equally flattering, there was a certainty of his having a numerous and well-attended school, in a neighbourhood with whose inhabitants he was acquainted.

Honest, kind-hearted Paddy !—pity that you should ever feel distress or hunger !—pity that you should be compelled to seek in another land the hard-earned pittance by which you keep the humble cabin over the head of your chaste wife and naked children ! Alas ! what noble materials for composing a national character, of which humanity might be justly proud, do the lower orders of the Irish possess, if raised and cultivated by a Christian education ! Pardon me, gentle readers, for this momentary ebullition ; I grant I am a little dark now. I assure you, however, the tear of enthusiastic admiration is warm on my eyelids, when I remember the flitches of bacon, the sacks of potatoes, the bags of meal, the *miscawns* of butter, and the dishes of eggs—not omitting crate after crate of turf—which came in such rapid succession to Mat Kavanagh during the first week in which he opened his school. Ay, and many a bottle of stout poteen, when

“ The eye of the gauger saw it not,”

was, with a sly, good-humoured wink, handed over to Mat, or Nancy, no matter which, from under the comfortable drab jock, with velvet-covered collar, erect about the honest ruddy face of a warm, smiling farmer, or even the tattered frieze of a poor labourer, anxious to secure the attention of the “ masther ” to his little “ *Shoneen*,” whom, in the extravagance of his ambition, he destined to “ wear the robes as a clargy.” Let no man say, I repeat, that the Irish are not fond of education.

In the course of a month Mat’s school was full to the doorposts ; for, in fact, he had the parish to himself—many attending from a distance of three, four, and five miles. His merits, however, were believed to be great, and his character for learning stood high, though unjustly so ; for a more superficial, and, at the same time, a more presuming dunce never existed ; but his character alone could secure him a good attendance. He, therefore, belied the unfavourable prejudices against the Findramore folk which had gone abroad, and was a proof, in his own person, that the reason of the former schoolmasters’ miscarriage lay in the belief of their incapacity which existed

among the people. But Mat was one of those showy, shallow fellows, who did not lack for assurance.

The first step a hedge schoolmaster took on establishing himself in a school was to write out, in his best copperplate hand, a flaming advertisement, detailing, at full length, the several branches he professed himself capable of teaching. I have seen many of these—as who that is acquainted with Ireland has not?—and, beyond all doubt, if the persons that issued them were acquainted with the various heads recapitulated, they must have been buried in the most profound obscurity, as no man but a walking encyclopædia—an Admirable Crichton—could claim an intimacy with them, embracing, as they often did, the whole circle of human knowledge. 'Tis true the vanity of the pedagogue had full scope in these advertisements, as there was none to bring him to an account, except some rival, who could only attack him on those practical subjects which were known to both. Independently of this, there was a good-natured collusion between them on those points which were beyond their knowledge, inasmuch as they were not practical but speculative, and by no means involved their character or personal interests. On the next Sunday, therefore, after Mat's establishment at Findramore, you might see a circle of the peasantry assembled at the chapel-door, perusing, with suitable reverence and admiration on their faces, the following advertisement; or perhaps Mat himself, with a learned, consequential air, in the act of explaining it to them.

“EDUCATION.

“Mr. Matthew Kavanagh, Philomath and Professor of the Learned Languages, begs leave to inform the Inhabitants of Findramore and its vicinity that he Lectures on the following Branches of Education, in his Seminary at the above-recited place:—

“Spelling, Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic, upon altogether new principles, hitherto undiscovered by any excepting himself, and for which he expects a Patent from Trinity College, Dublin; or, at any rate, from Squire Johnston, Esq., who paternizes many of the pupils. Book-keeping, by single and double entry, Geometry, Trigonometry, Stereometry, Mensuration, Navigation, Gauging, Surveying, Dialling, Astronomy, Astrology, Austerity, Fluxions, Geography, ancient and modern—Maps,

the Projection of the *Spear*—Algebra, the Use of the Globes, Natural and Moral Philosophy, Pneumatics, Optics, Dioptics, Catoptics, Hydraulics, Ærostatics, Geology, Glorification, Divinity, Mythology, Midicinality, Physic, by theory only, Metaphysics practically, Chemistry, Electricity, Galvanism, Mechanics, Antiquities, Agriculture, Ventilation, Explosion, etc.

“In Classics—Grammar, Cordery, Æsop’s Fables, Erasmus’ Colloquies, Cornelius Nepos, Phœdrus, Valerius Maximus, Justin, Ovid, Sallust, Virgil, Horace, Juvenal, Persius, Terence, Tully’s Offices, Cicero, Manouverius Turgidus, Esculapius, Regerius, Satanus Nigrus, Quintilian, Livy, Thomas Aquinas, Cornelius Agrippa, and Cholera Morbus.

“Greek Grammar, Greek Testament, Lucian, Homer, Sophocles, Eschylus, Thucydides, Aristophanes, Xenophon, Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, and the Works of Alexander the Great; the manners, habits, customs, usages, meditations of the Grecians; the Greek digamma resolved, Prosody, Composition both in prose-verse, and oratory in English, Latin, and Greek; together with various other branches of learning, and scholastic profundity—*quos enumerare longum est*—along with Irish Radically, and a small taste of Hebrew upon the Masoretic text.

“MATTHEW KAVANAGH, *Philomath.*”

Having posted this document upon the chapel-door, and in all the public places and cross-roads of the parish, Mat considered himself as having done his duty. He now began to teach, and his school continued to increase to his heart’s content, every day bringing him fresh scholars. In this manner he flourished till the beginning of winter, when those boys who, by the poverty of their parents, had been compelled to go to service to the neighbouring farmers flocked to him in numbers, quite voracious for knowledge. An addition was consequently built to the school-house, which was considerably too small; so that, as Christmas approached, it would be difficult to find a more numerous or merry establishment under the roof of a hedge school. But it is time to give an account of its interior.

The reader will, then, be pleased to picture to himself such a house as I have already described—in a line with the hedge; the eave of the back roof within a foot of the ground behind it; a large hole exactly in the middle of the “*riggin*,” as a chimney; immediately under which is an excavation in the floor, burned away by a large fire of turf, loosely heaped together. This is surrounded by a circle of urchins, sitting

on the bare earth, and exhibiting a series of speckled shins, all radiating towards the fire, like sausages on a *Poloni* dish. There they are—wedged as close as they can sit; one with half a thigh off his breeches—another with half an arm off his tattered coat—a third without breeches at all, wearing as a substitute a piece of his mother's old petticoat pinned about his loins—a fourth, no coat—a fifth with a cap on him because he has got a scald, from having sat under the juice of fresh hung bacon—a sixth with a black eye—a seventh with two rags about his heels to keep his kibes clean—an eighth crying to get home because he has got a headache, though it may be as well to hint that there is a drag-hunt to start from beside his father's in the course of the day. In this ring, with his legs stretched in a most lordly manner, sits, upon a deal chair, Mat himself, with his hat on, basking in the enjoyment of unlimited authority. His dress consists of a black coat, considerably in want of repair, transferred to his shoulders through the means of a clothes-broker in the county town; a white cravat, round a large stuffing, having that part which comes in contact with the chin somewhat streaked with brown—a black waistcoat with one or two "tooth-an'-egg" metal buttons sewed on where the original had fallen off—black corduroy inexpressibles, twice dyed, and sheep's-grey stockings. In his hand is a large broad ruler, the emblem of his power, the woful instrument of executive justice, and the signal of terror to all within his jurisdiction. In a corner below is a pile of turf, where, on entering, every boy throws his two sods with a pitch from under his left arm. He then comes up to the master, catches his forelock with finger and thumb, and bobs down his head, by way of making him a bow, and goes to his seat. Along the walls on the ground is a series of round stones, some of them capped with a straw collar or hassock, on which the boys sit; others have bosses, and many of them hobs—a light but compact kind of boggy substance found in the mountains. On these several of them sit; the greater number of them, however, have no seats whatever, but squat themselves down, without compunction, on the hard floor. Hung about, on wooden pegs driven into the walls, are the shapeless yellow "*caubeens*" of such as can boast the luxury of a hat, or caps made of goat or hare skin, the latter having the ears of the animal rising ludicrously over the temples, or cocked out at the sides, and the scut either before or behind, according to the taste or the humour of the wearer. The floor, which is only swept every Saturday, is strewed over with tops

of quills, pens, pieces of broken slate, and tattered leaves of *Reading made Easy*, or fragments of old copies. In one corner is a knot engaged at "Fox-and-geese," or the "Walls of Troy," on their slates; in another, a pair of them are "fighting bottles," which consists in striking the bottoms together, and he whose bottle breaks first of course loses. Behind the master is a third set, playing "heads and points"—a game of pins. Some are more industriously employed in writing their copies, which they perform seated on the ground, with their paper on a copy-board—a piece of planed deal the size of the copy, an appendage now nearly exploded—their cheek-bones laid within half an inch of the left side of the copy, and the eye set to guide the motion of the hand across, and to regulate the straightness of the lines and the forms of the letters. Others, again, of the more grown boys, are working their sums with becoming industry. In a dark corner are a pair of urchins thumping each other, their eyes steadily fixed on the master, lest he might happen to glance in that direction. Near the master himself are the larger boys, from twenty-two to fifteen—shaggy-headed slips, with loose-breasted shirts lying open about their bare chests; ragged colts, with white, dry, bristling beards upon them, that never knew a razor; strong stockings on their legs; heavy brogues, with broad, nail-paved soles; and breeches open at the knees. Nor is the establishment altogether without females; but these, in hedge schools, were too few in number to form a distinct class. They were, for the most part, the daughters of wealthy farmers, who considered it necessary to their respectability that they should not be altogether illiterate; such a circumstance being a considerable drawback, in the opinion of an admirer, from the character of a young woman for whom he was about to propose—a drawback, too, which was always weighty in proportion to her wealth or respectability.

Having given our readers an imperfect sketch of the interior of Mat's establishment, we will now proceed, however feebly, to represent him at work—with all the machinery of the system in full operation.

"Come, boys, rehearse—(buz, buz, buz)—I'll soon be after calling up the first spelling lesson—(buz, buz, buz)—then the mathematician—book-keepers—Latinists and Grecians, successfully. (Buz, buz, buz.) Silence there below!—your pens. Tim Casey, isn't this a purty hour o' the day for you to come into school at? arrah, and what kept you, Tim? Walk up wid yourself here, till we have a confabulation together; you see I love to be talking to you."

"Sir, Larry Branagan, here ; he's throwing spits at me out of his pen."—(Buz, buz, buz.)

"By my sowl, Larry, there's a rod in steep for you."

"Fly away, Jack—fly away, Jill ; come again, Jack——"

"I had to go to Paddy Nowlan's for tobaccy, sir, for my father." (Weeping with his hand knowingly across his face—one eye laughing at his comrades.)

"You lie, it wasn't."

"If you call me a liar agin, I'll give you a dig in the mug."

"It's not in your jacket."

"Isn't it?"

"Behave yourself ; ha ! there's the masther looking at you—you'll get it now."

"None at all, Tim ? And she's not after sinding an excuse wid you ? What's that undher your arm ?"

"My Gough, sir."—(Buz, buz, buz.)

"Silence, boys ! And you blackguard Lilliputian you, what kept you away till this ?"

"One bird pickin', two men thrashin' ; one bird pickin', two men thrashin' ; one bird pickin'——"

"Sir, they're stickin' pins in me here."

"Who is, Briney ?"

"I don't know, sir ; they're all at it."

"Boys, I'll go down to yees."

"I can't carry him, sir ; he'd be too heavy for me. Let Larry Toole do it, he's stronger nor me ; any way, there he's putting a corker pin in his mouth."—(Buz, buz, buz.)

"Whoo-hoo-hoo-hoo ! I'll never stay away agin, sir ; indeed I won't, sir. Oh, sir dear, pardon me this wan time ; and if ever you cotch me doing the like agin, I'll give you lave to welt the sowl out of me."—(Buz, buz, buz.)

"Behave yourself, Barny Byrne."

"I'm not touching you."

"Yes, you are ; didn't you make me blot my copy."

"Ho, by the livin', I'll pay you goin' home for this."

"Hand me the taws."

"Whoo-hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo—what'll I do, at all at all ? Oh, sir dear, sir dear, sir dear—hoo-hoo-hoo !"

"Did she send no message, good or bad, before I lay on ?"

"Oh, not a word, sir, only that my father killed a pig yestherday, and he wants you to go up to-day at dinner-time."—(Buz, buz, buz.)

"It's time to get lave ; it isn't—it is ; it isn't—it is," etc.

"You lie, I say ; your faction never was able to fight ours. Didn't we lick all your dirty breed in Buillagh-battha fair ?"

"Silence there!"—(Buz, buz, buz.)

"Will you meet us on Sathurday, and we'll fight it out clane?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Tim, but you got a big fright, anyhow. Whist, ma bouchal; sure I was only jokin' you; and sorry I'd be to bate your father's son, Tim. Come over and sit beside myself at the fire here. Get up, Micky Donoghue, you big burnt-shinn'd spalpeen you, and let the dacent boy sit at the fire."

"Hullabaloo hoo-hoo-hoo—to go to give me such a welt only for sitting at the fire, and me brought turf wid me."

"To-day, Tim?"

"Yes, sir."

"At dinner-time, is id?"

"Yes, sir."

"Faith, the dacent strain was always in the same family."—(Buz, buz, buz.)

"Horns, horns, cock horns; oh, you up'd wid them, you lifted your fingers—that's a mark, now—hould your face till I blacken you."

"Do you call thim two sods, Jack Lanigan? Why, 'tis only one long one broke in the middle; but you must make it up to-morrow, Jack. How is your mother's tooth?—did she get it pulled out yet?"

"No, sir."

"Well, tell her to come to me, an' I'll write a charm for it that'll cure her.—What kept you till now, Paddy Magouran?"

"Couldn't come any sooner, sir."

"You couldn't, sir; and why, sir, couldn't you come any sooner, sir?"

"See, sir, what Andy Nowlan done to my copy."—(Buz, buz, buz.)

"Silence! I'll massacre yees if yees don't make less noise."—(Buz, buz, buz.)

"I was down with Mrs. Kavanagh, sir."

"You were, Paddy—an' Paddy, *ma bouchal*, what war you doing there, Paddy?"

"Masther, sir, spake to Jim Kenny here; he made my nose bleed."

"Eh, Paddy?"

"I was bringin' her a layin' hen, sir, that my mother promised her at mass on Sunday last."

"Ah, Paddy, you're a game bird yourself, wid your layin' hens; you're as full o' mischief as an egg's full o' mate—(*omnes*, ha, ha, ha, ha!). Silence, boys—what are you laughin' at?—ha, ha, ha! Paddy, can you spell Nebachodnazure for me?"

"No, sir."

"No, nor a better scholar, Paddy, could not do that, *ma bouchal*; but I'll spell it for you. Silence, boys—whist, all of ye, till I spell Nebachodnazure for Paddy Magouran. Listen; and you yourself, Paddy, are one of the letthers—

" 'A turf and a *clod* spells Nebachod—
A knife and a razure spells Nebachodnazure—
Three pair of boots and five pair of shoes
Spells Nebachodnazure, the King of the Jews.' "

Now, Paddy, that's spelling Nebachodnazure by the science of Ventilation; but you'll never go that deep, Paddy."

"I want to go out, if you plase, sir."

"Is that the way you ax me, you vagabone?"

"I want to go out, sir"—(pulling down the forelock).

"Yes, that's something dacent. By the sowl of Newton, that invinted fluxions, if ever you forget to make a bow again I'll flog the enthrills out of you—wait till the pass comes in."

Then comes the spelling lesson.

"Come, boys, stand up to the spelling lesson."

"Micky, show me your book till I look at *my* word. I'm fifteenth."

"Wait till I see my own."

"Why do you crush for?"

"That's my place."

"No, it's not."

"Sir, spake to—— I'll tell the masther."

"What's the matther there?"

"Sir, he won't let me into my place."

"I'm before you."

"No, you're not."

"I say I am."

"You lie, pug-face. Ha! I called you pug-face; tell now, if you dare."

"Well, boys, down with your pins in the book. Who's king?"

"I am, sir."

"Who's queen?"

"Me, sir."

"Who's prince?"

"I am prince, sir."

"Tag-rag and bob-tail, fall into your places."

"I've no pin, sir."

"Well, down with you to the tail—now, boys."

Having gone through the spelling task, it was Mat's custom

to give out six *hard words*, selected according to his judgment, as a final test, but he did not always confine himself to that. Sometimes he would put a number of syllables arbitrarily together, forming a most heterogeneous combination of articulate sounds.

"Now, boys, here's a deep word that'll thry yees. Come, Larry, spell *me-mo-man-dran-san-ti-fi-can-du-ban-dan-ti-al-i-tv*, or *mis-an-thro-po-mor-phi-ta-ni-a-nus-mi-ca-li-ation*; — that's too hard for you, is it? Well, then, spell phthisic. Oh, that's physic you're spellin'. Now, Larry, do you know the difference between physic and phthisic?"

"No, sir."

"Well, I'll expound it: phthisic, you see, manes—whisht, boys; will yees hould yer tongues there—phthisic, Larry, signifies—that is, phthisic—mind, it's not physic I'm expounding; phthisic—boys, will yees stop yer noise there—signifies—but, Larry, it's so deep a word in larnin' that I should draw it out on a slate for you. And now I remimber, man alive, you're not far enough on yet to undherstand it; but what's physic, Larry?"

"Isn't that, sir, what my father tuck the day he got sick, sir?"

"That's the very thing, Larry. It has what larned men call a medical property, and resembles little rickety Dan Reilly there—it retrogrades. Och! och! I'm the boy that knows things—you see now how I expounded them two hard words for yees, boys—don't yees?"

"Yes, sir," etc., etc.

"So, Larry, you haven't the larnin' for that either. But here's an asier one—spell me Ephabridotas (Epaphroditas)—you can't!—hut, man!—you're a big dunce entirely, that little shoneen Sharkey there below would *sack*. God be wid the day when I was the likes of you; it's I that was the bright gorsoon entirely;—and so sign was on it, when a great larned traveller—silence, boys, till I tell yees this (a dead silence)—from Thrinity College, all the way in Dublin, happened to meet me one day—seeing the slate and Gough, you see, undher my arm, he axes me, 'Arrah, Mat,' says he, 'what are you *in*?' says he. 'Faix, I'm in my waistcoat, for one thing,' says I, off-hand—silence, childhre, and don't laugh so loud—(ha, ha, ha!). So he looks closer at me. 'I see that,' says he; 'but what are you reading?' 'Nothing at all, at all,' says I; 'bad manners to the taste, as you may see, if you've your eyesight.' 'I think,' says he, 'you'll be apt to *die* in your waistcoat;' and set spurs to a fine

saddle mare he rid—faith, he did so—thought me so cute—(omnes—ha, ha, ha !). Whisht, boys, whisht ; isn't it a terrible thing that I can't tell yees a joke but you split your sides laughing at it—(ha, ha, ha !)—don't laugh so loud, Barney Casey"—(ha, ha, ha !).

Barney: "I want to go out, if you plase, sir."

"Go, avick ; you'll be a good scholar yet, Barney. Faith, Barney knows whin to laugh, anyhow.

"Well, Larry, you can't spell Ephabridotas ?—thin here's a short weeshy one, and whoever spells it will get the pins ;—spell a red rogue wid three letters. You, Micky ? Dan ? Jack ? Natty ? Alick ? Andy ? Pether ? Jim ? Tim ? Pat ? Rody ? you ? you ? you ? Now, boys, I'll hould ye my little Andy here, that's only beginning the *Rational Spelling Book*, bates you all ; come here, Andy, alanna. Now, boys, if he bates you, you must all bring him a little *miscawn* of butter between two kale blades in the mornin' for himself. Here, Andy, avourneen, spell red rogue wid three letthers."

Andy: "M a t—Mat."

"No, no, avick ; that's myself, Andy ;—it's red rogue, Andy—hem !—F——"

"F o x—fox."

"That's a man, Andy. Now, boys, mind what you owe Andy in the mornin', plase God, won't yees ?"

"Yes, sir." "Yes, sir." "Yes, sir." "I will, sir." "And I will, sir." "And so will I, sir," etc., etc., etc.

I know not whether the Commissioners of Education found the monitorial system of instruction in such of the old hedge schools as maintained an obstinate resistance to the innovations of modern plans. That Bell and Lancaster deserve much credit for applying and extending the principle (I speak without any reference to its merits) I do not hesitate to grant ; but it is unquestionably true that the principle was reduced to practice in Irish hedge schools long before either of these worthy gentlemen were in existence. I do not, indeed, at present remember whether or not they claim it as a discovery, or simply as an adaptation of a practice which experience, in accidental cases, had found useful, and which they considered capable of more extensive benefit. I remember many instances, however, in which it was applied—and applied, in my opinion, though not as a permanent system, yet more judiciously than it is at present. I think it a mistake to suppose that silence among a number of children in school is conducive to the improvement either of health or intellect. That the chest and

the lungs are benefited by giving full play to the voice I think will not be disputed; and that a child is capable of more intense study and abstraction in the din of a school-room than in partial silence (if I may be permitted the word) is a fact which I think any rational observation would establish. There is something cheering and cheerful in the noise of friendly voices about us—it is a restraint taken off the mind, and it will run the lighter for it; it produces more excitement, and puts the intellect in a better frame for study. The obligation to silence, though it may give the master more ease, imposes a new moral duty upon the child, the sense of which must necessarily weaken his application. Let the boy speak aloud, if he pleases—that is, to a certain pitch; let his blood circulate; let the natural secretions take place, and the physical effluvia be thrown off by a free exercise of voice and limbs; but do not keep him dumb and motionless as a statue—his blood and his intellect both in a state of stagnation, and his spirit below zero. Do not send him in quest of knowledge alone, but let him have cheerful companionship on his way; for depend upon it, that the man who expects too much either in discipline or morals from a boy is not, in my opinion, acquainted with human nature. If an urchin titter at his own joke, or that of another, if he give him a jagg of a pin under the desk, imagine not that it will do him an injury, whatever phrenologists may say concerning the organ of destructiveness. It is an exercise to the mind, and he will return to his business with greater vigour and effect. Children are not men, nor influenced by the same motives—they do not reflect, because their capacity for reflection is imperfect; so is their reason: whereas, on the contrary, their faculties for education (excepting judgment, which strengthens my argument) are in greater vigour in youth than in manhood. The general neglect of this distinction is, I am convinced, a stumbling-block in the way of youthful instruction, though it characterises all our modern systems. We should never forget that they are children; nor should we bind them by a system whose standard is taken from the maturity of human intellect. We may bend our reason to theirs, but we cannot elevate their capacity to our own. We may produce an external appearance sufficiently satisfactory to ourselves; but, in the meantime, it is probable that the child may be growing in hypocrisy, and settling down into the habitual practice of a fictitious character.

But another and more serious objection may be urged against the present strictness of scholastic discipline—which is, that it

deprives the boy of a sense of free and independent agency. I speak this with limitations, for a master should be a monarch in his school, but by no means a tyrant; and decidedly the very worst species of tyranny is that which stretches the young mind upon the bed of too rigorous a discipline—like the despot who exacted from his subjects so many barrels of perspiration whenever there came a long and severe frost. Do not familiarise the mind when young to the toleration of slavery, lest it prove afterwards incapable of recognising and relishing the principle of an honest and manly independence. I have known many children on whom a rigour of discipline, affecting the mind only (for corporal punishment is now almost exploded), impressed a degree of timidity almost bordering on pusillanimity. Away, then, with the specious and long-winded arguments of a false and mistaken philosophy. A child will be a child, and a boy a boy, to the conclusion of the chapter. Bell or Lancaster would not relish the pap or caudle-cup three times a day; neither would the infant on the breast feel comfortable after a gorge of ox-beef. Let them, therefore, put a little of the mother's milk of human kindness and consideration into their strait-laced systems.

A hedge schoolmaster was the general scribe of the parish, to whom all who wanted letters or petitions written uniformly applied—and these were glorious opportunities for the pompous display of pedantry. The remuneration usually consisted of a bottle of whisky.

A poor woman, for instance, informs Mat that she wishes to have a letter written to her son, who is a soldier abroad.

"An' how long is he gone, ma'am?"

"Och, thin, masther, he's from me goin' an' fifteen years; an' a comrade of his was spakin' to Jim Dwyer, an' says his ridgment's lyin' in the Island of Budanages, somewhere in the back parts of Africa."

"An' is it a letther or petition you'd be afther havin' me to indite for you, ma'am?"

"Och, a letther, sir—a letther, masther; an' may the Lord grant you all kinds of luck, good, bad, an' indifferent, both to you an' yours; an' well it's known, by the same token, that it's yourself has the nice hand at the pen entirely, an' can indite a letther or pertition that the priest o' the parish mightn't be ashamed to own to it."

"Why, then, 'tis I that ud scorn to deteriorate upon the superminence of my own execution at inditin' wid a pen in my hand; but would you feel a delectability in my superscriptionisin'?

the epistolary correspondency, ma'am, that I'm about to adopt?"

"Eagh? och, what am I sayin'!—*sir*—masther—*sir*?—the noise of the crathurs, you see, is got into my ears; and, besides, I'm a bit bothered on both sides of my head ever since I had that weary *weed*."

"Silence, boys; bad manners to yees, will ye be aisy, you Lilliputian Bæotians—by my s—hem—upon my credit, if I go down to that corner I'll castigate yees in dozens; I can't spake to this dacent woman, with your insuperable turbulentiality."

"Ah, avourneen, masther, but the larnin's a fine thing, anyhow; an' maybe 'tis yourself that hasn't the tongue in your head, an' can spake the tall, high-flown English; a-wurrah, but your tongue hangs well, anyhow—the Lord increase it!"

"Lanty Cassidy, are you gettin' on wid yer Stereometry? *festina, mi discipuli; vocabo Homerum, mox atque mox*. You see, ma'am, I must tache thim to spake an' effectuate a translation of the larned languages sometimes."

"Arrah, masther dear, how did you get it all into your head, at all at all?"

"Silence, boys—*tace*—'*conticuere omnes intentique ora tenebant*.' Silence, I say agin."

"You could slip over, maybe, to Doran's, masther, do you see? You'd do it betther there, I'll engage. Sure an' you'd want a dhrop to steady your hand, anyhow."

"Now, boys, I am goin' to indite a small taste of literal correspondency over at the public-house here; you *litterati* will hear the lessons for me, boys, till afther I'm back agin; but mind, boys, *absente domino, strepuunt servi*—meditate on the philosophy of that; and, Mick Mahon, take your slate and put down all the names; and, upon my sou—hem—credit, I'll castigate any boy guilty of *misty manners* on my retrogradation thither; *ergo momentote, cave ne titubes mandataque frangas*."

"In throth, sir, I'd be long sarry to throuble you; but he's away fifteen years, and I wouldn't thrust it to another; and the corplar that commands the ridgment would regard your hand-write and your inditin'."

"Don't, ma'am, plade the smallest taste of apology."

"Eagh?"

"I'm happy that I can sarve you, ma'am."

"Musha, long life to you, masther, for that same, anyhow—but it's yourself that's deep in the larnin' and the langridges; the Lord increase yer knowledge—sure, an' we all want his blessin', you know."

THE RETURN.

"Well, boys, ye've been at it—here's swelled faces and bloody noses. What blackened your eye, Callaghan? You're a purty prime ministher, ye boxing blackguard, you. I left you to keep pace among these factions, and you've kicked up a purty dust. What blackened your eye—egh?"

"I'll tell you, sir, whin I come in, if you please."

"Ho, you vagabones, this is the ould work of the faction between the Bradys and the Callaghans—bastin' one another; but, by my sowl, I'll baste you all through other. You don't want to go out, Callaghan. You had fine work here since; there's a dead silence now; but I'll pay you presently. Here, Duggan, go out wid Callaghan, an' see that you bring him back in less than no time. It's not enough for your fathers and brothers to be at it, who have a *right* to fight, but you must battle betune you—have your field days itself!"

(*Duggan returns*)—"Hoo—hoo—sir, my nose. Oh, *murdher sherry*, my nose is broked!"

"Blow your nose, you spalpeen, you—where's Callaghan?"

"Oh, sir, bad luck to him every day he rises out of his bed; he got a stone in his fist, too, that he *hot* me a pelt on the nose wid, and then made off home."

"Home, is id? Start, boys, off—chase him, lie into him—asy, curse yees, take time gettin' out; that's it—keep to him—don't wait for me. Take care, you little spalpeens, or you'll brake your bones, so you will. Blow the dust of this road, I can't see my way in it!"

"Oh! murdher, Jim, agra, my knee's out of joint."

"My elbow's smashed, Paddy. Bad luck to him—the devil fly away wid him—oh! ha! ha!—oh! ha! ha! murdher—hard fortune to me, but little Mickey Geery fell, an' thripped the masther, an' himself's disabled now—his black breeches split too—look at him feelin' them—oh! oh! ha! ha!—by tare-an'-outy, Callaghan will be murdhered if they cotch him."

This was a specimen of civilisation which Ireland only could furnish; nothing, indeed, could be more perfectly ludicrous than such a chase; and such scenes were by no means uncommon in hedge schools; for wherever severe punishment was dreaded—and, in truth, most of the hedge-masters were unfeeling tyrants—the boy, if sufficiently grown to make a good race, usually broke away, and fled home at the top of his speed. The pack then were usually led on by the master, who mostly headed them himself, all in full cry, exhibiting such a scene as

should be witnessed in order to be enjoyed. The neighbours—men, women, and children—ran out to be spectators; the labourers suspended their work to enjoy it, assembling on such eminences as commanded a full view of the pursuit.

"Bravo, boys—success, masther; lie into him—where's your huntin'-horn, Mr. Kavanagh—he'll bate yees, if ye don't take the wind of him. Well done, Callaghan; keep up your heart, your sowl, and you'll do it asy—yer gaining on them, *ma bouchal*—the masther's down, you gallows clip, an' there's none but the scholars afther ye—he's safe."

"Not he; I'll hould a naggin, the poor scholar has him; don't you see he's close at his heels?"

"*Done*, by my song—they'll never come up wid him; listen to their leather crackers and cord-a-roys, as their knees bang agin one another. Hark forrit, boys! hark forrit! huzzaw, you thieves, huzzaw!"

"Yer beagles is well winded, Mr. Kavanagh, an' gives good tongue."

"Well, masther, you had your chase for nothin', I see."

"Mr. Kavanagh," another would observe, "I didn't think you war so stiff in the hams as to let the gorsoon bate you that-a-way—your wind's failin', sir."

"The schoolmaster was abroad" then, and never was the "march of intellect" at once so rapid and unsuccessful.

During the summer season it was the usual practice for the scholars to transfer their paper, slates, and books to the green which lay immediately behind the school-house, where they stretched themselves on the grass, and resumed their business. Mat would bring out his chair, and, placing it on the shady side of the hedge, sit with his pipe in his mouth, the contented lord of his little realm, whilst nearly a hundred and fifty scholars of all sorts and sizes lay scattered over the grass, basking under the scorching sun in all the luxury of novelty, nakedness, and freedom. The sight was original and characteristic, and such as Mr. Brougham would have been delighted with—"The schoolmaster was abroad again."

As soon as one o'clock drew near, Mat would pull out his *Ring-dial*, holding it against the sun, and declare the hour.

"Now, boys, to yer dinners, and the rest to play."

"Hurroo, darlin's, to play—the masther says it's dinner-time! —whip-spur-an'-away-grey—hurroo—whack—hurroo!"

"Masther, sir, my father bid me ax you home to yer dinner."

"No; he'll come to huz—come wid me, if you plase, sir."

"Sir, never heed them; my mother, sir, has some of what

you know—of the flitch I brought to Shoneen on last Aisther, sir."

This was a subject on which the boys gave themselves great liberty—an invitation, even when not accepted, being an indemnity for the day; it was usually followed by a battle between the claimants, and bloody noses were the issue. The master himself, after deciding to go where he was certain of getting the best dinner, generally put an end to the quarrels by a reprimand, and then gave notice to the disappointed claimants of the successive days on which he would attend at their respective houses.

"Boys, you all know my maxim—to go, for fear of any jealousies, boys, wherever I get the *worst* dinner; so tell me now, boys, what yer dacent mothers have all got at home for me?"

"My mother killed a fat hen yestherday, sir, an' you'll have a lump of bacon and 'flat dutch' along wid it."

"We'll have hang beef and greens, sir."

"We tried the praties this mornin', sir, an' we'll have new praties, an' bread an' butther, sir."

"Well, it's all good, boys; but rather than show favour or affection, do you see, I'll go wid Andy here, and take share of the hen an' bacon; but, boys, for all that, I'm fonder of the other things, you persave; and as I can't go wid you, Mat, tell your respectable mother that I'll be with her to-morrow; and wid you, Larry, ma bouchal, the day after."

If a master were a single man, he usually "went round" with the scholars each night; but there were generally a few comfortable farmers, leading men in the parish, at whose house he chiefly resided; and the children of these men were treated with the grossest and most barefaced partiality. They were altogether privileged persons, and had liberty to beat and abuse the other children of the school, who were certain of being most unmercifully flogged if they even dared to prefer a complaint against the favourites. Indeed, the instances of atrocious cruelty in hedge schools were almost incredible, and such as in the present enlightened time would not be permitted. As to the state of the "poor scholar," it exceeded belief; for he was friendless and unprotected. But though legal prosecutions in those days were never resorted to, yet, according to the characteristic notions of the Irish retributive justice, certain cases occurred in which a signal, and at times a fatal, vengeance was executed on the person of the brutal master. Sometimes the brothers and other relatives of the mutilated

child would come in a body to the school, and flog the pedagogue with his own taws until his back was lapped in blood. Sometimes they would beat him until few symptoms of life remained. Occasionally he would get a nocturnal notice to quit the parish in a given time, under a penalty which seldom proved a dead letter in case of non-compliance. Not unfrequently did those whom he had, when boys, treated with such barbarity go back to him, when young men, not so much for education's sake, as for the especial purpose of retaliating upon him for his former cruelty. When cases of this nature occurred, he found himself a mere cipher in his school, never daring to practise excessive severity in their presence. Instances have come to our own knowledge of masters who, for their mere amusement, would go out to the next hedge, cut a large branch of furze or thorn, and having first carefully arranged the children in a row round the walls of the school, their naked legs stretched out before them, would sweep round the branch, bristling with spikes and prickles, with all their force against their limbs, until, in a few minutes, a circle of blood was visible on the ground where they sat, their legs appearing as if they had been scarified. This the master did whenever he happened to be drunk or in a remarkably good humour. The poor children, however, were obliged to laugh loud and enjoy it, though the tears were falling down their cheeks in consequence of the pain he inflicted. To knock down a child with the fist was considered nothing harsh; nor, if a boy were cut or prostrated by a blow of a cudgel on the head, did he ever think of representing the master's cruelty to his parents. Kicking on the shins with the point of a brogue or shoe, bound round the edge of the sole with iron nails, until the bone was laid open, was a common punishment; and as for the usual slapping, horsing, and flogging, they were inflicted with a brutality that in every case richly deserved for the tyrant not only a peculiar whipping by the hand of the common executioner, but a separation from civilised society by transportation for life. It is a fact, however, that in consequence of the general severity practised in hedge schools, excesses of punishment did not often produce retaliation against the master; these were only exceptions—isolated cases that did not affect the general character of the discipline in such schools.

Now, when we consider the total absence of all moral and religious principles in these establishments, and the positive presence of all that was wicked, cruel, and immoral, need we be surprised at the character of Ireland at this enlightened

day? But her education and herself were neglected, and now behold the consequence!

I am sorry to perceive the writings of many respectable persons on Irish topics imbued with a tinge of spurious liberality that frequently occasions them to depart from truth. To draw the Irish character as it *is*, as the model of all that is generous, hospitable, and magnanimous, is in some degree fashionable; but although I am as warm an admirer of all that is really excellent and amiable in my countrymen as any man, yet I cannot, nor will I, extenuate their weak and indefensible points. That they possess the *elements* of a noble and exalted national character, I grant; nay, that they actually do possess such a character, under limitations, I am ready to maintain. Irishmen, setting aside their religious and political prejudices, are grateful, affectionate, honourable, faithful, generous, and even magnanimous; but under the stimulus of religious and political feeling they are treacherous, cruel, and inhuman—will murder, burn, and exterminate, not only without compunction, but with a satanic delight worthy of a savage. Their education, indeed, was truly barbarous; they were trained and habituated to cruelty, revenge, and personal hatred in their schools. Their knowledge was directed to evil purposes; disloyal principles were industriously insinuated into their minds by their teachers, every one of whom was a leader of some illegal association. The matter placed in their hands was of a most inflammatory and pernicious nature as regarded politics; and as far as religion and morality were concerned, nothing could be more gross and superstitious than the books which circulated among them. Eulogiums on murder, robbery, and theft were read with delight in the histories of Freney the Robber, and the Irish Rogues and Rapparees; ridicule of the Word of God, and hatred to the Protestant religion, in a book called Ward's Cantos, written in Hudibrastic verse; the downfall of the Protestant Establishment, and the exaltation of the Romish Church, in Columbkil's Prophecy, and latterly in that of Pastorini; a belief in every species of religious imposture, in the Lives of the Saints, of St. Patrick, of St. Columbkil, of St. Teresa, St. Francis Xavier, the Holy Scapular, and several other works, disgraceful to human reason. Political and religious ballads of the vilest doggerel, miraculous legends of holy friars persecuted by Protestants, and of signal vengeance inflicted by the divine power on their persecutors, were in the mouths of the young and old, and of course firmly fixed in their credulity.

Their weapons of controversy were drawn from the Fifty

Reasons, the Doleful Fall of Andrew Sall, the Catholic Christian, the Grounds of the Catholic Doctrine, a Net for the Fishers of Men, and several other publications of the same class. The books of amusement read in these schools, including the first mentioned in this list, were the Seven Champions of Christendom, the Seven Wise Masters and Mistresses of Rome, Don Belianis of Greece, the Royal Fairy Tales, the Arabian Nights' Entertainments, Valentine and Orson, Gesta Romanorum, Dorastus and Faunia, the History of Reynard the Fox, the Chevalier Faublax; to those I may add the Battle of Aughrim, Siege of Londonderry, History of the Young Ascanius (a name by which the Pretender was designated), and the Renowned History of the Siege of Troy; the Forty Thieves, Robin Hood's Garland, the Garden of Love and Royal Flower of Fidelity, Parimus and Parismenus; along with others, the names of which shall not appear in these pages. With this specimen of education before our eyes, is it at all extraordinary that Ireland should be as she is?

"Thady Bradly, will you come up wid your slate till I examine you in your figures? Go out, sir, and blow your nose first, and don't be after making a looking-glass out of the sleeve of your jacket. Now that Thady's out, I'll hould you, boys, that none of yees know how to expound his name—eh? do yees? But I needn't ax—well, 'tis Thadeus; and maybe that's as much as the priest that christened him knew. Boys, you see what it is to have the larnin'—to lade the life of a gentleman, and to be able to talk deeply wid the clargy! Now, I could run down any man in arguin', except a priest; and if the bishop was afther consecratin' me, I'd have more larnin' than the most of them; but you see I'm not consecrated—and—well, 'tis no matter—I only say that the more's the pity.

"Well, Thady, when did you go into subtraction?"

"The day beyond yestherday, sir; yarra musha, sure 'twas yourself, sir, that shet me the first sum."

"Masther, sir, Thady Bradly stole my cutter—that's *my* cutter, Thady Bradly."

"No, it's not" (in a low voice).

"Sir, that's my cutter—an' there's three nicks in id."

"Thady, is that his cutter?"

"There's your cutter for you. Sir, I found it on the flure, and didn't know who own'd it."

"You know'd very well who own'd it; didn't Dick Martin see you liftin' it off o' my slate when I was out?"

"Well, if Dick Martin saw him, it's enough. An' 'tis Dick

that's the tindher-hearted boy, an' would knock you down wid a lump of a stone if he saw you murtherin' but a fly!

"Well, Thady—throth, Thady, I fear you'll undherstand subtraction better nor your tacher. I doubt you'll apply it to 'Practice' all your life, ma bouchal, and that you'll be apt to find it 'the Rule of False' at last. Well, Thady, from one thousand pounds, no shillings, and no pince, how will you subtract one pound? Put it down on your slate—this way—

$$\begin{array}{r} 1000 \quad 00 \quad 00 \\ 1 \quad 00 \quad 00. \end{array}$$

"I don't know how to shet about it, masther."

"You don't? An' how dare you tell me so, you *shingawn*, you—you Cornelius Agrippa, you—go to your sate and study it, or I'll—ha! be off, you——

"Pierce Mahon, come up wid your multiplication. Pierce, multiply four hundred by two—put it down—that's it—

$$\begin{array}{r} 400 \\ \text{By } 2. \end{array}$$

"Twice nought is one." (Whack, whack.) "Take that as an illustration—is that one?"

"Faith, masther, that's two, anyhow; but, sir, is not wanst nought nothin'? Now, masther, sure there can't be less than nothin'."

"Very good, sir."

"If wanst nought be nothin', then twice nought must be somethin', for it's double what wanst nought is—see how *I'm* sthruck for *nothin'*, an' me knows it—hoo! hoo! hoo!"

"Get out, you Esculapian; bud I'll give you *somehin'* by-and-by, jist to make you remimber that you know *nothin'*—off wid you to your sate, you spalpeen, you—to tell me that there can't be less than nothin', when it's well known that sporting Squire O'Canter is worth a thousand pounds less than nothin'."

"Paddy Doran, come up to your 'Intherest.' Well, Paddy, what's the intherest of a hundred pound at five per cent.? Boys, have manners, you thieves, you."

"Do you mane, masther, *per cent. per annum*?"

"To be sure I do—how do you state it?"

"I'll say, as a hundher pound is to one year, so is five per cent. *per annum*."

"Hum—why—what's the number of the sum, Paddy?"

"'Tis No. 84, sir." (The master steals a glance at the Key to Gough.)

"I only want to look at it in the Gough, you see, Paddy—an' how dare you give me such an answer, you big-headed dunce, you—go off an' study it, you rascally Lilliputian—off wid you, and don't let me see your ugly mug till you know it.

"Now, *gentlemen*, for the Classics; and first for the Latinarians—Larry Cassidy, come up wid your Asop. Larry, you're a year at Latin, an' I don't think you know Latin for *frize*, what your own coat is made of, Larry. But, in the first place, Larry, do you know what a man that taches Classics is called?"

"A schoolmasther, sir." (Whack, whack, whack.)

"Take that for your ignorance—and that to the back of it—ha! that'll tache you—to call a man that taches Classics a schoolmasther, indeed! 'Tis a Profissor of Humanity itself he is—(whack, whack, whack)—ha! you ringleader, you; you're as bad as Dick O'Connell, that no masther in the county could get any good of, in regard that he put the whole school together by the ears, wherever he'll be, though the spalpeen wouldn't stand fight himself. Hard fortune to you! to go to put such an affront upon me, an' me a Profissor of Humanity. What's Latin for pantaloons?"

"Fem—fem—femi."

"No, it's not, sir."

"Femora——"

"Can you do it?"

"Don't strike me, sir; don't strike me, sir, an' I will."

"I say, can you do it?"

"Femoral—(whack, whack, whack)—*Ah*, sir! *ah*, sir! 'tis femoral—*ah*, sir! 'tis femoral—*ah*, sir!"

"This thratement to a Profissor of Humanity." (Drives him head over heels to his seat.) "Now, sir, maybe you'll have Latin for throwers agin, or, by my sowl, if you don't, you must peel, and I'll tache you what a Profissor of Humanity is!"

"Dan Shiel, you little starved-looking spalpeen, will you come up to your Illocution?—and a purty figure you cut at it, wid a voice like a penny thrumpet, Dan! Well, what speech have you got now, Dan, ma bouchal. Is it 'Romans, counthrymin, and lovers'?"

"No, shir; yarrah, didn't I *spake* that speech before? 'Tis wan, masther, that I'm afther *pennen* myself!"

"No, you didn't, you fairry. Ah, Dan, little as you are, you take credit for more than ever you spoke, Dan, agrah; but, faith, the same thrick will come agin you some time or other,

avick! Go and get that speech betther; I see by your face you haven't it. Off wid you, and get a patch upon your breeches; your little knees are through them, though 'tisn't by prayin' you've wore them, anyhow, you little hop-o'-my-thumb, you, wid a voice like a rat in a thrap; and yet you'll be practisin' illocution; off wid you, man alive! You little spitfire, you; if you and your schoolfellow, Dick O'Connell, had been wid the Jews whin they wanted to burn down the standin' corn of the Philistins, the divil a fox they might bother their heads about, for yees both would have carried firebrands by the hundher for them. Spake the next speech bittther—between you and Dick, you keep the school in perpetual agitation."

Sometimes the neighbouring gentry used to call into Mat's establishment, moved probably by a curiosity excited by his character and the general conduct of the school. On one occasion Squire Johnston and an English gentleman paid him rather an unexpected visit. Mat had that morning got a new scholar, the son of a dancing tailor in the neighbourhood; and as it was reported that the son was nearly equal to the father in that accomplishment, Mat insisted on having a specimen of his skill. He was the more anxious on this point, as it would contribute to the amusement of a travelling schoolmaster, who had paid him rather a hostile visit, which Mat, who dreaded a literary challenge, feared might occasion him some trouble.

"Come up here, you little *sartor*, till we get a dacent view of you. You're a son of Ned Malone's—aren't you?"

"Yes, and of Mary Malone, my mother, too, sir."

"Why, thin, that's not bad, anyhow—what's your name?"

"Dick, sir."

"Now, Dick, ma bouchal, isn't it true that you can dance a hornpipe?"

"Yes, sir."

"Here, Larry Brady, take the door off the hinges, an' lay it down on the flure, till Dick Malone dances the Humours of Glynn. Silence, boys, not a word; but jist keep lookin' an."

"Who'll sing, sir? for I can't be afther dancin' a step widout the music."

"Boys, which of yees 'll sing for Dick? I say, boys, will none of yees give Dick the harmony? Well, come, Dick, I'll sing for you myself—

" 'Torral lol, lorral lol, lorral lol, lorral lol—
Toldherol, lorral lol, lorral lol, lal,' " etc., etc.

"I say, Misther Kavanagh," said the strange master, "what angle does Dick's heel form in the second step of the treble, from the kibe on the left foot to the corner of the door forninst him?"

To this mathematical poser Mat made no reply, only sang the tune with redoubled loudness and strength, whilst little Dicky pounded the old crazy door with all his skill and alacrity. The "boys" were delighted.

"Bravo, Dick, that's a man—welt the flure—cut the buckle—murdher the clocks—rise upon suggaun, and sink upon gad—down the flure flat, foot about—keep one foot on the ground, and t'other never off it," saluted him from all parts of the house.

Sometimes he would receive a sly hint, in a feigned voice, to call for "Devil stick the Fiddler," alluding to the master. Now a squeaking voice would chime in; by-and-by another, and so on, until the master's bass had a hundred and forty trebles, all in chorus, to the same tune.

Just at this moment the two gentlemen entered; and, reader, you may conceive, but I cannot describe, the face which Mat (who sat with his back to the door, and did not see them until they were some time in the house) exhibited on the occasion. There he sung *ore rotundo*, throwing forth an astounding tide of voice; whilst little Dick, a thin, pale-faced urchin, with his head, from which the hair stood erect, sunk between his hollow shoulders, was performing prodigious feats of agility.

"What's the matter? what's the matter?" said the gentlemen. "Good morning, Mr. Kavanagh."

"———Torral lol, lol———"

Oh, good——oh, good morning——gintlemen, with extrame kindness," replied Mat, rising suddenly up, but not removing his hat, although the gentlemen instantly uncovered.

"Why, thin, gintlemen," he continued, "you have caught us in our little relaxations to-day; but—hem!—I mane to give the boys a holiday for the sake of this honest and respectable gintleman in the frieze jock, who is not entirely ignorant, you persave, of litherature; and we had a small taste, gintlemen, among ourselves, of Sathurnalian licentiousness, *ut ita dicam*, in regard of—hem!—in regard of this lad here, who was dancing a hornpipe upon the door, and we, in absence of betther music, had to supply him with the harmony; but, as your honours know, gintlemen, the greatest men have bent themselves on espacial occasions."

"Make no apology, Mr. Kavanagh; it's very commendable in you to *bend* yourself by condescending to amuse your pupils."

"I beg your pardon, Squire, I can take freedoms with you; but perhaps the concomitant gentleman, your friend here, would be plased to take my stool. Indeed, I always use a chair, but the back of it, if I may be permitted the use of a small portion of jocularly, was as frail as the fair sect; it went home yister-day to be minded. Do, sir, condescind to be *sated*. Upon my reputation, Squire, I'm sorry that I have not accommodation for you too, sir; except one of these hassocks, which, in joint considheration with the length of your honour's legs, would be, I anticipate, rather low; but *you*, sir, will honour me by taking the stool."

By considerable importunity he forced the gentleman to comply with his courtesy; but no sooner had he fixed himself upon the seat than it overturned, and stretched him, black coat and all, across a wide concavity in the floor, nearly filled up with white ashes produced from mountain turf. In a moment he was completely white on one side, and exhibited a most laughable appearance; his hat, too, was scorched and nearly burned on the turf coals. Squire Johnston laughed heartily, as did the other schoolmaster, whilst the Englishman completely lost his temper—swearing that so uncivilised an establishment was not between the poles.

"I solemnly supplicate upwards of fifty pardons," said Mat; "bad manners to it for a stool! but, your honour, it was my own defect of speculation, bekase, you see, it's *minus* a leg—a circumstance of which you warn't in a proper capacity to take cognation, as not being personally acquainted with it. I humbly supplicate upwards of fifty pardons."

The Englishman was now nettled, and determined to wreak his ill-temper on Mat by turning him and his establishment into ridicule.

"Isn't this, Mister —; I forget your name, sir."

"Mat Kavanagh, at your sarvice."

"Very well, my learned friend, Mr. Mat Kavanagh, isn't this precisely what is called a *hedge school*?"

"A hedge school!" replied Mat, highly offended; "my siminary a hedge school! No, sir; I scorn the *cognomen*, *in toto*. This, sir, is a Classical and Mathematical Siminary, under the personal superintendence of your humble servant."

"Sir," replied the other master, who till then was silent, wishing perhaps to *sack* Mat in presence of the gentlemen,

"it *is* a hedge school; and he is no scholar, but an ignoramus, whom I'd sack in three minutes, that would be ashamed of a hedge school."

"Ay," says Mat, changing his tone, and taking the cue from his friend, whose learning he dreaded, "it's jist, for argument's sake, a hedge school; and, what is more, I scorn to be ashamed of it."

"And do you not teach occasionally under the hedge behind the house here?"

"Granted," replied Mat; "and now, where's your *vis consequentiæ*?"

"Yes," subjoined the other, "produce your *vis consequentiæ*."

The Englishman himself was rather at a loss for the *vis consequentiæ*, and replied, "Why don't you live, and learn, and teach like civilised beings, and not assemble like wild asses—pardon me, my friend, for the simile—at least, like wild colts, in such clusters behind the ditches?"

"A clusther of wild coults!" said Mat; "that shows what you are; no man of classical larnin' would use such a word."

"Permit me, sir," replied the strange master, "to ax your honour one question—did you receive a *classical* education? Are you college-bred?"

"Yes," replied the Englishman; "I can reply to both in the affirmative. I'm a Cantabrigian."

"You're a *what*?" asked Mat.

"I am a Cantabrigian."

"Come, sir, you must explain yourself, if you please. I'll take my oath that's neither a classical nor a mathematical tarm."

The gentleman smiled. "I was educated in the English College of Cambridge."

"Well," says Mat, "and maybe you would be as well off if you had picked up your larnin' in our own Thrinity; there's good picking in Thrinity for gentlemen like you, that are sober and harmless about the brains, in regard of not being overly bright."

"You talk with contempt of a hedge school," replied the other master. "Did you never hear, for all so long as you war in Cambridge, of a nate little spot in Greece, called the Groves of Academus?"

"‘Inter lucos Academi, quærere verum.’"

What was Plato himself but a hedge schoolmaster? and, with

humble submission, it casts no slur on an Irish tacher to be compared to him, I think. You forget, also, sir, that the Dhruids taught under their oaks."

"Ay," added Mat, "and the Tree of Knowledge, too. Faith, an' if that same tree was now in being, if there wouldn't be hedge schoolmasters, there would be plinty of hedge scholars, anyhow—particularly if the fruit was well tasted."

"I believe, Millbank, you must give in," said Squire Johnston. "I think you have got the worst of it."

"Why," said Mat, "if the gintleman's not afther bein' sacked clane, I'm not here."

"Are you a mathematician?" inquired Mat's friend, determined to follow up his victory; "do you know Mensuration?"

"Come, I do know Mensuration," said the Englishman, with confidence.

"And how would you find the solid contents of *a load of thorns*?" said the other.

"Ay, or how will you consther and parse me this sintince?" said Mat:—

"Regibus et clotibus solemus stopere window,
Nos numerus sumus fruges consumere nati,
Stercora flat stire rara terra-tantaro bungo."

"Aisy, Misther Kavanagh," replied the other; "let the Cantabrigian resolve the one I propounded him first."

"And let the Cantabrigian then take up mine," said Mat; "and if he can expound it I'll give him a dozen more to bring home in his pocket, for the Cambridge folk to crack after their dinner along wid their nuts."

"Can you do the 'Snail'?" inquired the stranger.

"Or 'A and B on opposite sides of a wood,' widout the Key?" said Mat.

"Maybe," said the stranger, who threw off the frieze jock, and exhibited a muscular frame of great power, cased in an old black coat—"maybe the gintleman would like to get a small taste of the '*Scuffle*.'"

"Not at all," replied the Englishman; "devil the least curiosity I have for it—I assure you I have not. What the deuce do they mean, Johnston? I hope you have influence over them."

"Hand me down that cudgel, Jack Brady, till I show the gintleman the 'Snail' and the 'Maypole,'" said Mat.

"Never mind, my lad; never mind, Mr.—a—Mr."

Kavanagh. I give up the contest—I resign you the palm, gentlemen. The hedge school has beaten Cambridge hollow.”

“One poser more, before you go, sir,” said Mat. “Can you give Latin for a *game egg* in two words?”

“Eh, a game egg? No, by my honour I cannot—gentlemen, I yield.”

“Ay, I thought so,” replied Mat; “bring it home to Cambridge, anyhow, and let them chew their cuds upon it, you persave; and, by the sowl of Newton, it will puzzle the whole establishment, or my name’s not Kavanagh.”

“It will, I am convinced,” replied the gentleman, eyeing the herculean frame of the strange teacher, and the substantial cudgel in Mat’s hand; “it will, undoubtedly. But who is this most miserable naked lad here, Mr. Kavanagh?”

“Why, sir,” replied Mat, with his broad Milesian face expanding with a forthcoming joke, “he is, sir, in a sartin and especial particularity, a namesake of your own.”

“How is that, Mr. Kevanagh?”

“My name’s not Kevanagh,” replied Mat, “but Kavanagh; the Irish A for ever!”

“Well, but how is the lad a namesake of mine?” said the Englishman.

“Bekase, you see, he’s a *poor scholar*, sir,” replied Mat; “an’ hope your honour will pardon me for the facetiousness—

“ ‘Quid vetat ridentem dicere verum?’

as Horace says to Mæcenas on the first of the Sathirs!”

“There, Mr. Kavanagh, is the price of a suit of clothes for him.”

“Michael, will you rise up, sir, and make the gintleman a bow? he has given you the price of a shoot of clothes, ma bouchal.”

Michael came up with a thousand rags dangling about him; and, catching his forelock, bobbed down his head after the usual manner, saying, “Musha yarra, long life to your honour every day you rise, an’ the Lord grant your sowl a short stay in purgatory, wishin’ ye, at the same time, a happy death afterwards!”

The gentlemen could not stand this, but laughed so heartily that the argument was fairly knocked up.

It appeared, however, that Squire Johnston did not visit Mat’s school from mere curiosity.

“Mr. Kavanagh,” said he, “I would be glad to have a little

private conversation with you, and will thank you to walk down the road a little with this gentleman and me."

When the gentlemen and Mat had gone ten or fifteen yards from the school door, the Englishman heard himself congratulated in the following phrases:—

"How do you feel afther bein' *sacked*, gintleman? The masther sacked you! You're a purty scholar! It's not you, Mr. Johnston; it's the other. You'll come to argue agin, will you? Where's your head now? Bah! Come back till we put the *soogaun*¹ about your neck. Bah! You must go to school to Cam-bridge agin, before you can argue an Irisher! Look at the figure he cuts! Why duv ye put the one foot past the other, when ye walk, for? Bah! Dunce!!"

"Well, boys, never heed yees for that," shouted Mat; "never fear but I'll castigate yees, ye spalpeen villains, as soon as I go back. Sir," said Mat, "I supplicate upwards of fifty pardons. I assure you, sir, I'll give them a most inordinate castigation for their want of respectability."

"What's the Greek for tobaccy?" they continued, "or for Larry O'Toole? or for bletherum skite? How many beans make five? What's Latin for poteen and flummery? You a mathematician! Could you measure a snail's horn? How does your hat stay up and nothing undher it? Will you fight Barny Farrell wid one hand tied? I'd lick you myself! What's Greek for goster?" with many other expressions of a similar stamp.

"Sir," said Mat, "lave the justice of this in my hands. By the sowl of Newton, your own counthryman, ould Isaac, I'll flog the marrow out of them."

"You have heard, Mr. Kavanagh," continued Mr. Johnston, as they went along, "of the burning of Moore's stables and horses the night before last. The fact is that the magistrates of the county are endeavouring to get the incendiaries, and would render a service to any person capable, either directly or indirectly, of facilitating that object, or stumbling on a clue to the transaction."

"And how could I do you a sarvice in it, sir?" inquired Mat.

"Why," replied Mr. Johnston, "from the children. If you could sift them in an indirect way, so as, without suspicion,

¹ The *soogaun* was a collar of straw which was put round the necks of the dunces, who were then placed at the door, that their disgrace might be as public as possible.

to ascertain the absence of a brother or so on that particular night, I might have it in my power to serve you, Mr. Kavanagh. There will be a large reward offered to-morrow, besides."

"Oh, damn the penny of the reward ever I'd finger, even if I knew the whole conflagration," said Mat; "but lave the siftin' of the children wid myself, and if I can get anything out of them, you'll hear from me; but your honour must keep a close mouth, or you might have occasion to lend me the money for my own funeral some o' these days. Good morning, gentlemen."

The gentlemen departed.

"May the most ornamental kind of hard fortune pursue you every day you rise, you desavin' villain, that would have me turn *informer*, bekase your brother-in-law, rack-rintin' Moore's stable and horses were burnt; but I'd see you and all your breed in the flames o' hell first." Such was Mat's soliloquy as he entered the school on his return.

"Now, boys, I'm afther giving yees to-day and to-morrow for a holiday. To-morrow we will have our Gregory: a fine faste, plinty of poteen, and a fiddle; and you will tell your brothers and sisters to come in the evening to the dance. You must bring plinty of bacon, hung beef, and fowls, bread and cabbage—not forgetting the phaties, and sixpence a head for the *crathur*, boys, won't yees?"

The next day, of course, was one of festivity; every boy brought, in fact, as much as would serve six; but the surplus gave Mat some good dinners for three months to come. This feast was always held upon St. Gregory's day, from which circumstance it had its name. The pupils were at liberty, for that day, to conduct themselves as they pleased; and the consequence was that they became generally intoxicated, and were brought home in that state to their parents. If the children of two opposite parties chanced to be at the same school, they usually had a fight, of which the master was compelled to feign ignorance; for if he identified himself with either faction, his residence in the neighbourhood would be short. In other districts, where Protestant schools were in existence, a battle-royal commonly took place between the opposite establishments, in some field lying half-way between them. This has often occurred.

Every one must necessarily be acquainted with the ceremony of *barring out*. This took place at Easter and Christmas. The master was brought or sent out on some fool's errand, the door shut and barricaded, and the pedagogue excluded until a certain term of vacation was extorted. With this, however, the master

never complied until all his efforts at forcing an entrance were found to be ineffectual; because, if he succeeded in getting in, they not only had no claim to a long vacation, but were liable to be corrected. The schoolmaster had also generally the clerkship of the parish; an office, however, which, in the country parts of Ireland, is without any kind of salary beyond what results from the patronage of the priest—a matter of serious moment to a teacher, who, should he incur his reverence's displeasure, would be immediately driven out of the parish. The master, therefore, was always tyrannical and insolent to the people in proportion as he stood high in the estimation of the priest. He was also the master of ceremonies at all wakes and funerals, and usually sat among a crowd of the village sages, engaged in exhibiting his own learning, and in recounting the number of his religious and literary disputations.

One day, soon after the visit of the gentlemen above mentioned, two strange men came into Mat's establishment—rather, as Mat thought, in an unceremonious manner.

"Is your name Matthew Kavanagh?" said one of them.

"That is indeed the name that's upon me," said Mat, with rather an infirm voice, whilst his face got pale as ashes.

"Well," said the fellow, "we'll jist trouble you to walk with us a bit."

"How far, with submission, are yees goin' to bring me?" said Mat.

"Do you know Johnny Short's hotel?"¹

"My curse upon you, Findramore," exclaimed Mat, in a paroxysm of anguish, "every day you rise! but your breath's unlucky to a schoolmaster; and it's no lie what was often said, that no schoolmaster ever thruv in you, but something ill came over him."

"Don't curse the town, man alive," said the constable, "but curse your own ignorance and folly. Anyway, I wouldn't stand in your coat for the wealth of the three kingdoms. You'll undoubtedly swing, unless you turn king's evidence. It's about Moore's business, Mr. Kavanagh."

"Dang the that I'd do, even if I knew anything about it; but, God be praised for it, I can set them all at defiance—that I'm sure of. Gentlemen, innocence is a jewel."

"But Barny Brady, that keeps the shebeen house—you know *him*—is of another opinion. You and some of the Findramore boys took a sup in Barny's on a sartin night?"

¹ The county gaol.

"Ay, did we, on many a night, and will agin, plase Providence--no harm in takin' a sup, anyhow--by the same token, that maybe you and yer friend here would have a drop of rale stuff, as a thrate from me?"

"I know a thrick worth two of that," said the man. "I thank ye kindly, Mr. Kavanagh."

One Tuesday morning, about six weeks after this event, the largest crowd ever remembered in that neighbourhood was assembled at Findramore Hill, whereon had been erected a certain wooden machine--yclept a gallows. A little after the hour of eleven o'clock two carts were descried winding slowly down a slope on the southern side of the town and church, which I have already mentioned as terminating the view along the level road north of the hill. As soon as they were observed, a low, suppressed ejaculation of horror ran through the crowd, painfully perceptible to the ear--in the expression of ten thousand murmurs all blending into one deep groan--and to the eye, by a simultaneous motion that ran through the crowd like an electric shock. The place of execution was surrounded by a strong detachment of military; and the carts that conveyed the convicts were also strongly guarded.

As the prisoners approached the fatal spot, which was within sight of the place where the outrage had been perpetrated, the shrieks and lamentations of their relations and acquaintances were appalling indeed. Fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, cousins, and all persons to the most remote degree of kindred and acquaintanceship, were present--all excited by the alternate expression of grief and low-breathed vows of retaliation; not only relations, but all who were connected with them by the bonds of their desperate and illegal oaths. Every eye, in fact, coruscated with a wild and savage fire that shot from under brows knit in a spirit that seemed to cry out blood, vengeance--blood, vengeance. The expression was truly awful, and what rendered it more terrific was the writhing reflection that numbers and physical force were unavailing against a comparatively small body of armed troops. This condensed the fiery impulse of the moment into an expression of subdued rage that really shot like livid gleams from their visages.

At length the carts stopped under the gallows; and, after a short interval spent in devotional exercise, three of the culprits ascended the platform, who, after recommending themselves to God, and avowing their innocence, although the clearest possible evidence of guilt had been brought against them, were launched into another life, among the shrieks and groans of the

multitude. The other three then ascended ; two of them either declined or had not strength to address the assembly. The third advanced to the edge of the boards—*it was Mat*. After two or three efforts to speak, in which he was unsuccessful from bodily weakness, he at length addressed them as follows :—

“My friends and good people,—In hopes that you may be all able to demonstrate the last proposition laid down by a dying man, I undertake to address you before I depart to that world where Euclid, De Cartes, and many other larned men are gone before me. There is nothing in all philosophy more true than that, as the multiplication fable says, ‘two and two makes four’; but it is equally veracious and worthy of credit that if you do not abnegate this system that you work the common rules of your proceedings by—if you don’t become loyal men, and give up burnin’ and murdherin’, the solution of it will be found on the gallows. I acknowledge myself to be guilty, for not separatin’ myself clane from yeas ; we have been all guilty, and may God forgive thim that jist now departed wid a lie in their mouth.”

Here he was interrupted by a volley of execrations and curses, mingled with “stag,” “informer,” “thraithor to the thrue cause!” which, for some time, compelled him to be silent.

“You may curse,” continued Mat ; “but it’s too late now to abscond the truth—the ‘*sum*’ of my wickedness and folly is worked out, and you see the ‘*answer*.’ God forgive me, many a young crathur I enticed into the *Ribbon* business, and now it’s to ind in *Hemp*! Obey the law ; or, if you don’t, you’ll find it a *lex talionis*—the construction of which is, that if a man burns or murders, he won’t miss hanging ; take warning by me—by us all ; for, although I take God to witness that I was not at the perpetration of the crime that I’m to be suspended for, yet I often connived, when I might have superseded the carrying of such intintions into effectuality. I die in pace wid all the world, save an’ except the Findramore people, whom may the maledictionary execration of a dying man follow into eternal infinity! My manuscripton of conic sections——” Here an extraordinary buzz commenced among the crowd, which rose gradually into a shout of wild, astounding exultation. The sheriff followed the eyes of the multitude, and perceived a horseman dashing with breathless fury up towards the scene of execution. He carried and waved a white handkerchief on the end of a rod, and made signals with his hat to stop the execution. He arrived and brought a full pardon for Mat, and a

commutation of sentence to transportation for life for the other two. What became of Mat I know not ; but in Findramore he never dared to appear, as certain death would have been the consequence of his not dying *game*. With respect to Barny Brady, who kept the shebeen, and was the principal evidence against those who were concerned in this outrage, he was compelled to enact an *extempore* death in less than a month afterwards, having been found dead, with a slip of paper in his mouth inscribed, "*This is the fate of all Informers.*"

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